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SOUTINE

The Arts Council of Great Britain 1963

THE ARTS COUNCIL 1963

CHAIM SOUTINE

1893-1943

Arranged by
The Arts Council of Great Britain
in association with
The Edinburgh Festival Society

Second edition

At the Tate Gallery, London
28 September – 3 November

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FOREWORD

Soutine's reputation as one of the modern masters is firmly established both with artists and collectors, but few important exhibitions of his work have been held. The present exhibition, small as it is, is indeed the third largest ever assembled anywhere, and can claim to be the most representative to have been seen in Europe.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr David Sylvester for the discrimination and persistence he has brought to the peculiarly difficult task of selecting the works and for his essay in the catalogue, an original and illuminating contribution.

The catalogue entries have been compiled by Mr Maurice Tuchman, of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, with the assistance of Mr Sylvester. Mr Tuchman is planning a *catalogue raisonné* of Soutine's work, and the datings here given to the pictures provide the first serious contribution to the vexed question of Soutine chronology that has been published in more than a decade. The Arts Council is deeply grateful to him for making his work available and also for his valuable help in locating pictures and securing loans. We are grateful for similar assistance from Monsieur Jean Bouret, Miss Erica Brausen, Mr Peter Gimpel, Professor Jean Leymarie, Monsieur Raymond Nacenta, Mr Mark Roskill and Mr Peter Tunnard.

We have been exceptionally fortunate in the generosity of owners both public and private, and particularly in the magnificent response of American private collectors, most notably of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin and Mr and Mrs Henry Pearlman. We should like to extend our warmest gratitude to all lenders public and private; they are too numerous to mention individually here but their names will be found on page 28.

We are greatly indebted to the following for supplying blocks for colour reproduction: Mr Rex Nan Kivell, Plate 5; Mr Peter Rübel, Plate 10; Georg Waechter Memorial Foundation, Plate 15; Mr Jack I. Poses, Plate 17; Edizione del Milione, Milan, Plate 21; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Plates 25, 29.

Mrs Pearl Moeller, of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, has been most helpful in finding and supplying photographs for plates.

We wish to record our thanks to the Association Française d'Action Artistique for their patronage of the exhibition and in particular Monsieur Philippe Erlanger. Finally we would like to express our gratitude to the Director and Trustees of the Tate Gallery for granting us space in their galleries.

G. W.

INTRODUCTION

by DAVID SYLVESTER

Soutine had to have the thing he was painting out there in front of him. He couldn't invent. He couldn't paint from memory, even the memory of a motif he had worked from day after day. He couldn't paint from drawings or from photographs or from an earlier painting of the subject. He had to have the real thing there.

He even needed it there when painting his paraphrases of Old Masters. He never copied from the picture, either the original or a reproduction; he reconstructed the motif of the picture, worked from a model or a still-life subject disposed in accordance with the prototype. The prototypes included the Chardin still life with a skate in the Louvre, the Rembrandt in the Louvre of the carcass of an ox, the National Gallery Rembrandt of Hendrickje paddling, and several Courbets – paintings of a large fish and of a bull calf, and a study (in the collection of a patron of Soutine's) for one of the figures in *Les Demoiselles des bords de la Seine*.

Reconstituting the motif rather than working from the picture was a curious procedure to adopt when transposing other men's images. After all, one of the reasons why painters make copies or transpositions is to save themselves the bother of employing a model or buying a lobster or taking a trip to the country. And as a matter of fact Soutine was often put to more trouble than usual when he tried to find the living equivalent of an image he had chosen to adapt. Some of the most grotesque stories in the Soutine legend tell of such occasions. There is the story behind the picture based on Courbet's reclining girl – the days of motoring round the countryside before a suitable model was found; the jealousy of her husband, a railway gatekeeper, who, after one session, tried to stop her from posing; Soutine's rage and threats of legal action. There is the story behind the painting after the Rembrandt of Hendrickje paddling – the search for an appropriate peasant-woman; the business of persuading her that, in asking her to stand still in a brook up to her knees, hitching up her dress, Soutine was neither a madman nor trying to use her for immoral purposes; the sequel about the day on which he forced her to go on posing through a rainstorm while he went on working almost in the dark. There is the story about the carcass of beef which he had hanging in the studio while he painted four or more large canvases paraphrasing the Rembrandt carcass – the complaints of the neighbours at the stench of decaying flesh; the pail of blood used to freshen up the meat as it got dry; the model hired to fan away the flies so that the motif could be seen; the artist's growing rapture at the colours that emerged as the meat decomposed, and the neighbours' growing desperation; the calling-in of the police; Soutine's incomprehension and rage. He seems to have been particularly ruthless when inspired by Rembrandt.

The most interesting thing about such stories (for all of which Monroe Wheeler's monograph is the immediate source, though Charles Douglas, in *Artist Quarter*, relates a variant on the last) is not so much that Soutine was prepared to sacrifice everyone around him to his art, as that he couldn't bring himself to work in any other way than from nature. Even Cézanne's need to work from nature wasn't powerful enough to override his embarrassment over painting from a naked woman. Monet's attachment to working from nature was so strong that, when in his later years he wanted to do ideal rather than existing landscapes, he bought land and employed gardeners to make his ideal landscapes real before he painted them; yet even he used to go on with pictures in the absence of the motif. There can scarcely have been a painter as unable as Soutine to put brush to canvas without having the object in front of him – apart, presumably, from the little figures in the landscapes. How much he actually looked at the object, how much he needed it there as a sort of talisman, is open to question.

He was no less a creature of habit in his choice of subjects than in his method of working. (The narrowness of his subject-matter is, of course, partly explained by the fact of his not doing made-up compositions – but far from entirely explained when one considers the range of subjects which Monet had depicted from nature by the time he reached the age at which Soutine died.) It is significant that the exclusiveness of his range was not at all that of the specialist in landscape or in portraiture or in still life. Soutine worked in all these genres with near enough equal mastery, but within each genre his range of interests was exclusive.

The vast majority of his human images are single portraits, usually seated figures, half- or three-quarter-length. The male sitters, after 1920, are almost all young men or boys wearing some sort of civil uniform – pastry-cooks, page-boys, choir boys, valets, waiters – though the women and little girls are not so stereotyped. For the rest, there is a single nude, a mother-and-child, a few pictures of a woman reclining

or paddling or feeding geese, and several pairs of children (Soutine never painted a pair of adults) sitting or standing or walking. There are also some small pictures of farm animals.

His still-life subjects were at first quite wide in scope: he did table-tops with a variety of objects, he did several flower-pieces. But by the time he was thirty he had defined his personal range of themes, and it was patently obsessive. Thereafter he could do practically all his shopping for his still lifes at the butcher's and the fishmonger's. Sometimes the fish, flesh or fowl would be set off by tomatoes, lemons, bread, cutlery, a napkin, a jug. But by and large he had little interest in greengroceries, less still in man-made objects. He painted what was literally *nature morte*. (Not, by the way, that he ever did a skull: here the process of death would have been complete, and his concern with the process shows in those writhing fish and convulsed fowl of his which still seem in the process of dying.) His concentration upon the dead creature intensified with time. It is only one of several elements, and can be absent from the scene, in the still lifes painted by 1919. In the period between 1922 and about 1926, during which the majority of the still lifes were done, the dead creature, taking the centre of the stage, is at first often set off by other elements like napkins and tomatoes. In the latter part of this period and in the occasional subsequent still lifes, the corpse – of beef, rabbit, salmon, fowl – framed in close-up, is wholly isolated.

Landscape is the genre that covers the largest proportion of Soutine's surviving works. In spite of this and although he spent more than half his working life in Paris, he never did landscapes there, after some early essays: unlike Vuillard, Bonnard, Matisse, Utrillo, Giacometti, he didn't continue the Impressionist tradition of painting Paris's streets and squares and public gardens or the views from its windows. His landscapes of the Twenties were painted in small towns in the South of France, those of the Thirties and Forties in the countryside at various spots within two or three hours of Paris. The first great series was done at Céret in the French Pyrenees, where he worked almost continuously from 1919 to 1922. (Some of the so-called Céret landscapes might have been painted in other small hilltowns nearby; all look as if they are of the same place.) Trees and houses climb steep menacing hills with scarcely any sky in view; the colour is dense and dark. The next series was painted between then and 1925 at Cagnes-sur-mer in the Alpes Maritimes (which is to say that Soutine, who had in fact paid visits to Cagnes during his stay at Céret, was shifting the scene of his operations from the borders of Spain to those of Italy). Here again houses and trees are set in steep hills, but the composition is more open and the tonality much lighter – white-walled houses now dominating the trees – and the general effect is one of airiness as against the claustrophobia of the *Cérets*. Later in the 1920s Soutine at various times painted several almost identical views of a square at Vence, another village in the Alpes Maritimes; it is in effect a view of a single big tree against a backdrop of buildings. In 1933 he painted a view of Chartres Cathedral and during the following summer or two some pictures showing a country house set among trees (there seem to have been two different though similar houses). In the numerous landscapes he painted between 1936 and his death in 1943, however, a building scarcely or never appears. These landscapes, mostly done in the region of Chartres or at Auxerre or finally at Champigny-sur-Veuldre, are uniformly dominated by trees. Trunks and rich foliage – and at Champigny their reflections in water – fill out the picture-space. Here as often at Céret there is a sense of immersion in a dark dense vortex of leaves.

Soutine's work, then, shows a decided consistency in both subject-matter and method. Furthermore, the development of his style is free of the sharp, dramatic, switches of direction which are legion among artists of this century, so many of whom have at some time undergone a conversion. Broadly speaking, Soutine's style went through the sort of gradual evolution which we associate with, say, Vuillard, with a shift around 1922–23 from flatter to airier painting analogous to that which occurred in Vuillard's work around 1900. Soutine himself, however, came to look back upon this transition as momentous, and to regard the work he had done before it with a contemptuous hatred so overwhelming as to make it one of the ruling passions of his later life. He developed a mania for buying back works of the Céret period expressly in order to destroy them. His friend and patron Madeleine Castaing says that whenever she and her husband wanted to buy a picture Soutine had just completed, he would insist that before a price could be discussed they must go out and find him a couple of *Cérets*. He himself was a heavy spender on *Cérets*, and there are stories from several sources about the violence with which he destroyed them and the joy and relief he got from taking it out on them.

Certainly, Soutine always was a destroyer of his work, usually at or about the time he did it. (Ironically enough, a considerable proportion of the surviving pictures ascribed to him are canvases which he abandoned, slashed, only for them to be rescued from the dustbin by a concierge or cleaner and sold to some dealer who would have them repaired, re-lined and re-touched – in some cases freely re-painted.) All

the same, he doesn't seem to have habitually destroyed his later work without discrimination – without, that is, the intention to discriminate – whereas no *Céret* that came within his reach was safe. It wasn't, therefore, a question of his trying to discriminate retrospectively among his earlier works through a feeling that, though he had destroyed many of them at the time, he had not been exacting enough. He thought of virtually everything he had done before 1923 as worthless.

A possible reason for the force of his revulsion against his early work was its association with his early life. The misery and squalor he endured during his childhood and youth in Russia and then during his twenties, throughout his first ten years in France, are as harrowing to read about as anything in the pages of Gorky. In the winter of 1922–23, his thirtieth year, his life was magically transformed in an afternoon. Szittya relates that Soutine was sitting with a couple of painter friends on a bench in the street in Montparnasse – sitting on a bench because they couldn't afford the price of a coffee. At that moment Dr Albert C. Barnes, the greatest private collector of modern times, was visiting the gallery of Soutine's dealer Zborowski in the hope of discovering some young genius in the line of succession to the great post-impressionists. Barnes took no interest in anything Zborowski showed him but then discovered in a corner a torn and dirty canvas, a Soutine, wanted to know who the painter was and asked to see more. This is according to Szittya; other sources maintain that Barnes had previously been shown a Soutine by Paul Guillaume. What is sure is that Barnes now decided that Soutine was his man and sent someone off to fetch him. Soutine was found on his bench and delivered by car, dirty and unkempt, to Barnes, who had him take a bath, ordered him clothes from an English tailor, installed him in a comfortable studio, and bought a large number – the usual estimate is a a hundred – of his pictures. Soutine, when leaving his friends that afternoon in Montparnasse, had promised that if he got hold of any money he would help them and would also try to push their work with Barnes. He never came back, and thereafter he avoided meeting all his former friends and would turn them away from his door. He didn't go near his old haunts in Montparnasse for nearly twenty years, he revelled in any contact with the smart world, he made a great point of being well washed and well-dressed, and generally gave himself airs, as far as his extreme shyness and bad temper allowed him to. In short, he seems from the time of his first success to have tried to obliterate his past. It is, then, conceivable that his desire to obliterate work done before 1923 was part of his effort to obliterate his life up to 1923. On the other hand, his butchery of his early pictures was concentrated on the Céret landscapes, and, as we shall see, there were good reasons of an entirely impersonal kind why he should have formed a revulsion against these.

Soutine's main formative influence, according to virtually every writer on him, is supposed to have been van Gogh. It is also customary to say that he was indebted to German Expressionism and to the related expressionism of Chagall, who, with Modigliani, was a friend and a fellow-inmate of the studio block in the fifteenth arrondissement known as 'La Ruche'. No doubt current and recent expressionistic tendencies were part of Soutine's general background; and in several portraits of about 1918 to about 1923, such as the *Peasant Boy* of *c.* 1919-20 (No. 9), there are certainly affinities with Munch and the Central European Expressionists, though it is not easy to pin these down in a precise way. But the influences on Soutine's early development which are perfectly clear and specific in his actual works are, besides that of van Gogh, French influences – Cézanne and Bonnard. Bonnard seems to have influenced Soutine intermittently yet very directly: that is to say, while this influence is not obviously pervasive, certain pictures are unequivocally Bonnardesque, such as the *Flowers on a Chair* of *c.* 1917 (No. 3), the *Jug with Lilacs* of *c.* 1917–18 (No. 4, pl. 2), and, even several years later, the strange refulgent *Still Life with Red Meat* of *c.* 1923–24 (No. 27, pl. 16). The influences of Cézanne and van Gogh were at once more constant and more fully digested. Of these influences, I would suggest that Cézanne's was the more profound. (Incidentally, Soutine's well-known aversion from van Gogh is meaningless as evidence of anything. In the first place, it could just as well signify that he wasn't influenced by van Gogh as that he was and did not like admitting it. In the second place, at the time he is known to have expressed this aversion, he had come to hate his own early work. By that time he had no great liking for Cézanne either.)

Van Gogh's example is clearly evident in pictures such as the *Still Life with Fish* of *c.* 1918 (No. 5) and the *Red Gladioli* of *c.* 1918–19 (No. 7); and it can remain so in certain pictures done several years later, such as the *Landscape with Road, Cagnes* of *c.* 1923 (No. 22). On the other hand, there is nothing of van Gogh but much of Cézanne, combined with the dark mid-nineteenth century realism taught at the academies, in the *Still Life with Lemons* of *c.* 1916 (No. 1) and the related table-top still life in the Colin collection (illus. Wheeler, p. 36): the disposition of the table within the canvas and that of the objects upon the table,

the particular flattened elliptical form assumed by plates – these appear to derive very directly from Cézanne still lifes of the 1870s and '80s. But the real nature of Soutine's relationship to Cézanne begins to show in the remarkably authoritative *Portrait of the Painter Richard* of *c.* 1916–17 (No. 2, pl. 1). The composition suggests that Soutine had in mind van Gogh's portraits of the Arles period (the pattern on the wall too would seem to derive from these rather than any patterned background of Cézanne's). But the drawing and handling are Cézannesque. (And it is significant that the Cézannesque elements have not been transmitted via Modigliani, as we might easily have expected them to be in view of Soutine's regard for his friend and his friend's habit of parodying Cézanne; these elements have not previously been squeezed into the mould of Modigliani's stylizations, they come direct from the source.) The modelling of the face through the interaction of red and blue, and not through tone, is obviously inspired by Cézanne. So is the breaking up of the form into clearly articulated planes. And so too is the broadening of the head in the area of one ear, as if part of the lateral plane had been wrenched round towards the picture-surface in an effort akin to Cézanne's to take hold of volume in its full tactile reality and beat it, as it were, into the picture-plane.

The persistence of this influence is obvious in *The Apprentice* of *c.* 1922 (No. 20. pl. 13), which has exactly the slope of forms towards the right found in many Cézanne portraits of the Nineties, in the *Page-boy at Maxim's* of *c.* 1926 (No. 38, pl. 23), Cézannesque in the modelling of the head and in its harmonies of red, blue and brown, and even in *The Portrait of a Boy in Blue* of 1929 (No. 42, pl. 25), which recalls Cézanne both in composition and handling. Nor is this influence confined to the portraits. It is Cézanne rather than van Gogh who points towards the Céret landscapes, though the *Cérets* are always said to be particularly indebted to van Gogh—to the Provençal landscapes, of course – this presumably because of their surging, headlong diagonal movement. But, while there may be some similarity in the tempo and direction of the movement, there is no similarity at all in its action. Van Gogh is linear: the movement wriggling or streaking across the canvas is made by a system of serpentine or spiky lines which incorporates solid forms as a whirlpool sucks things in. Soutine's approach is plastic: the movement is made up of lurching, heaving *planes*. To look at a van Gogh landscape after looking at a *Céret* is to be vividly reminded how Japanese it is. The flatness of the Céret landscapes is not the flatness of a van Gogh, it is the flatness of a Cézanne, a flatness into which solidity has been compressed.

The *Trees at Céret* (No. 8, pl. 4), one of a series which Maurice Tuchman convincingly ascribes to *c.* 1919, the outset of the Céret period, is, as he says, reminiscent of van Gogh. But is it not equally or more reminiscent of Cézanne's *sous-bois*? The reaching-out of the branches towards the edges of the canvas: this recalls van Gogh, certainly. But the intricate relationship between the surface-pattern and the varying distances from the eye of the *columns* of the tree-trunks (a movement in and out of the picture, rather than a movement across it punctuated by *outlines* of tree-trunks): here, surely, the example of Cézanne's *sous-bois* has been at work. The warm glowing colours too are closer to certain of the *sous-bois* than to any van Gogh. As the Céret style develops, affinities with van Gogh diminish, those with Cézanne multiply. Consider the two similar landscapes belonging to Rex Nan Kivell (No. 14, pl. 5) and the Silberman Galleries (No. 12) which Tuchman ascribes to *c.* 1920–21. The black tendrils of branches in the former echo those in the foreground of such landscapes as the Courtauld *Montagne Sainte-Victoire au grand pin*; in the latter, the dark mass of foliage that seems to wing across the sky like a great bird calls to mind the *Grand Pin* at São Paolo. But Cézanne is not echoed in matters of detail only. Surely the style of these pictures grows quite directly from such Cézannes of around 1880 as the Boston Museum's *La route tournante*? There is the uptilting of foreground horizontal planes and the pulling-forward of the middle and far distance towards the picture-plane so that the contents of the scene are closely, densely, unnaturally packed together. There is the virtual exclusion of sky. There is the all-embracing dominance of the rich greens of leaves and grass offset by white houses with red roofs, their walls making planes parallel to the picture-plane. There is the counterpoint between movement into the picture, which is almost immediately checked and curtailed, and the sustained movement across the surface of the canvas. There is a light which radiates from within the forms, not a light like van Gogh's which is the impact of the sun upon surfaces.

Of course there is the surge and vehemence of the *Cérets* as against the slow measured movement of mature Cézanne. But the frenzy, unlike a van Gogh's, is not like a great wind blowing across the scene and bending everything before it; it is more like an earthquake, it is a sense of upheaval. Soutine, one might say, is related to Cézanne rather as El Greco is related to Titian (El Greco and Tintoretto were in fact Soutine's preferred old masters at the time he painted the *Cérets*). And this sense of upheaval, though in a less extreme form, is not at all foreign to Cézanne. It is

clearly manifest in the late paintings of the Bibémus quarry, but also present in much else of his work, as D. H. Lawrence was the first to point out, in 1929 ('Introduction to his Paintings', collected in *Phoenix*, London, Heinemann, 1936).

'When he makes Madame Cézanne *most still*, most appley, he starts making the universe slip uneasily about her. It was part of his desire: to make the human form, the *life* form, come to rest. Not static – on the contrary. Mobile but come to rest. And at the same time he set the unmoving material world into motion. Walls twitch and slide, chairs bend or rear up a little, cloths curl like burning paper. Cézanne did this partly to satisfy his intuitive feeling that nothing is really *statically* at rest – a feeling he seems to have had strongly – as when he watched the lemons shrivel or go mildewed, in his still-life group, which he left lying there so long so that he *could* see that gradual flux of change: and partly to fight the cliché, which says that the inanimate world *is* static, and that walls *are* still. In his fight with the cliché he denied that walls are still and chairs are static. In his intuitive self he *felt* for their changes.

'And these two activities of his consciousness occupy his later landscapes. In the best landscapes we are fascinated by the mysterious *shiftiness* of the scene under our eyes; it shifts about as we watch it. And we realize, with a sort of transport, how intuitively *true* this is of landscape. It is *not* still. It has its own weird anima, and to our wide-eyed perception it changes like a living animal under our gaze. This is a quality that Cézanne got marvellously.'

Lawrence's message about Cézanne could be said to have been that he was not the Apollonian artist Roger Fry saw him as, but one whose greatness lay precisely in the intensity of his synthesis between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. In Soutine's Céret landscapes the Dionysian principle takes control, altogether consuming its counterpart. Soutine always was, of course, in his methods of working, a classic example of the Dionysian type of artist, 'inspirational' in approach (and often going through weeks or months of inactivity awaiting 'inspiration'), in gesture vehement to the point of frenzy ('One day, furiously at work,' writes Wheeler, 'he dislocated his thumb and could not explain how it happened'). The end-products, for all that, can attain a certain equilibrium, are not always entirely manic. The Céret landscapes, however, are some of the most one-sided paintings in the history of art.

Looking at a *Céret* like the one from the Nan Kivell collection (No. 14, pl. 5) has nothing to do with the experience of *gazing* at a landscape. Here is a jungle of colour, layer upon impenetrable layer, not murky but of a luxurious darkness in which light is held as in porphyry or jasper or chalcedony. It is a light that belongs to the forms, not a light thrown upon them. The atmosphere, similarly, has nothing to do with how the weather is behaving in a given area at a certain time (and to give these landscapes, as some do, such titles as *Mistral* or *Storm at Céret* is like believing that *Pilgrim's Progress* is the story of a hiking tour). Whether it is noon or dusk, whether it is raining or the wind is blowing, is of no concern. Nor is it really a matter of importance what things the shapes stand for – that this is a hill or a house or a tree. We acknowledge that it is, but we get no feeling – such as we do before a Matisse, a Bonnard, a Picasso – that this particular transformation of an object is making us *see* this kind of object in a new way. We do not read this landscape in terms of objects and relations between objects. Our awareness cuts through objects. It responds to rhythms, to an interplay of forces. To the opposition, for example, on the left-hand side of the picture, between the hectic downward-rushing movement of the torpedo shape (the foliage of a tree) and the slow, straining, upward-mounting movement of the two pyramids (the house and the hill) one of which rises out of and above the other. As it reaches the upper apex, goes over the top, this striving motion suddenly explodes into a paroxysm of movement and counter-movement, into abandon and release. And the other experiences the painting evokes are of a kind that engage our whole bodies: swinging, diving, falling, staggering, skating, climbing, gliding, riding downhill, teetering on a cliff edge. It evokes them as if they were dissociated from any firm contact with external objects. We enact them as we act in a nightmare, in the void of a nightmare. They arouse panic: only this panic is resolved, for the opposing forces are all somehow contained and held in balance by the overriding rhythm of the picture as a whole – not a frantic but an easy rhythm, like the swinging of a pendulum – which resolves convulsion and conflict into an unexpected serenity.

The picture is about action. It is no more a painting of a mood than it is a visual painting: the emotions it expresses are the emotions that might accompany the actions it evokes. It is Dionysian not merely in its antagonism to Apollonian contemplation of an entity out there; Dionysian not merely in its freedom and in its frenzy: it is Dionysian in that it works upon us in imagination like an intoxicant. When drunk we act wiithout intention, without purpose, gratuitously, from a desire to act; we act without first asking ourselves how we feel, we discover the way we feel through the way we act. Outside us, everything merges, becomes

fluid, fluid in its boundaries, fluid in identity. Fluid too as to the status of objects: inanimate objects twitch and awaken into life. In the most eloquent lines ever published on Soutine, Thomas B. Hess (*Abstract Art*, New York, Viking, 1950, p. 69) writes thus of the *Hill at Céret* (No. 16, pl. 7), a picture which Tuchman, attributing it to *c.* 1921, describes as 'the high point of Soutine's Céret style'.

'I see the hill with a house on top, but below, and to the left, I find a hook-nosed witch, a handkerchief tied around her head, holding the collar of a squatting dragon. But the beast's right side is defined by a dark area which now appears to be a curling-horned steer, drastically foreshortened, rising up to the farmhouse, while below, guarding his eyes with his forearm, a man tumbles backward into the sea. A few minutes later, I might have difficulty in finding some of these forms again. Perhaps the landscape will return, with all its roads, banks of trees, coils of earth, and flying clouds. But the very manipulation of pigment has pried the subject from nature into the personal sensation of terror, violence – and paint. Such a picture repays hours of examination, for it is fitted together as deftly as any Cubist portrait. Interweaving layers of hue, coiled lines that shoot and cage motion within the rectangle, the elaborate play of tonalities up and down the image, all suggest spontaneity, but also disclose the patience and the labor involved. That the landscape is filled with animal energy, at times sinister, at times benevolently pastoral, is a logical projection of Soutine's vision. Everything in the painting breathes and devours space and color. Nature is again populated with demigods who re-sanctify their ancient myths under the most banal fields or within everyday trees.'

The landscape 'has its own weird anima, and . . . changes like a living animal under our gaze'. Lawrence's words come to mind, given a new twist by the overtones of extravagant fantasy for which there is no place in the landscapes of Cézanne. Yet the animation, and this alone, is enough to generate the metaphors, the allusions, the ambiguities of reference, in this, or any, Soutine. Forms with metamorphic implications are part of the stock-in-trade of modern art – of Picasso and Braque and Klee and Arp and Miró and Pollock and so on. They are generally the result, either, as with Picasso and Braque, of distorting a form signifying something in such a way that it also suggests another, or of using peculiarly generalized forms like Arp's biomorphs – all-purpose forms, so to speak – which almost automatically generate a multiplicity of evocations. Where Soutine is metaphorical, or metamorphic, it is for another reason. Consider the still life, *Fish and Tomatoes* (No. 32, pl. 17) in which the forks resting on either side of the plate of fish immediately suggest someone's hands ripping his stomach apart and laying bare the entrails – an image reinforced by the red of the tomatoes against the white of the napkin. Did Soutine see this metaphor? – before or while or after he painted the picture? He must have been strangely unaware of his obsessions if he did not (and perhaps he was; some of the stories about him suggest that he didn't allow himself to know himself too well), but at any rate the picture contains no clue. The shapes of the motif have not been transformed – as by Picasso – with an eye to giving them a double meaning. It is simply that the shapes, especially those of the forks, are more animated than they are in reality and for this reason alone take on an anthropomorphic character: the forks seem to be grasping hands only because they don't seem to be still life. In the same way, the imagery suggested by a picture like the *Hill at Céret* is really no more than a by-product of our recognition of the convulsive energy embodied in the forms and the terror and exhilaration this inspires.

And it is not only the metaphors, the allusions, that are subordinate to our response to the energy, the violence, the panic, the release, compressed in the paint. The landscape motif is secondary to the forces it has released. We may give the forms such names as hill and house and tree, but in the last resort such names are more definitive only in degree, not in kind, than names like 'hook-nosed witch' and 'squatting dragon'. This is an art of pure sensation, an art in which the painter had bodied forth in paint his experience of the motif in front of him without giving thought to the names of the elements of the motif. The resultant forms on the canvas are ambiguous, can be interpreted as having a variety of names, because the painter has given them no name.

It is an art comparable to Analytical Cubism, especially in its brief 'hermetic' phase – as distinct from the later work of Picasso and Braque, where the artist has often clearly had it in mind that a shape could mean this *and* that. In Analytical Cubism there is no evident consciousness of the identity of the objects before the painter, but a total concentration on crystallizing certain sensations they give rise to – a concentration that becomes possible only perhaps when the painter is working from the motif. The mature Céret landscapes represent a development from Cézanne's art parallel to its development in Analytical Cubism.

Both are forms of painting in which the physical reality of the picture as an object is as potent as that of an abstract painting, but which is also a vehicle of sensations of *particular* ex-

ternal objects. In Analytical Cubism the language is one of transparent planes and straight lines, a delicate crystalline style. In the *Cérets* it is made up of coils and daubs of opaque impasto, a dense and disturbed language. Where Analytical Cubism, with its marvellous luminosity, relates to visual sensations, the *Cérets*, those whirling masses of mass, convey intimations of the tactile experience of the motif which faces the painter from its distance out there but seems to hem him in, threatening to engulf him. The development of the Céret style, according to Tuchman's highly convincing chronology, led in the direction of bringing the contents of the scene ever closer to the picture-plane, until, in the *Village Square* (No. 17, pl. 8) and *Red Roofs* (No. 18, pl. 9), everything rears straight up almost filling the rectangle of the canvas. (The portraits can take on a similar conformation: the astonishing profile portrait, *Man Praying* (No. 10, pl. 12), with its surprising and perhaps significant resemblance to the Giacometti bronze busts known as *Têtes tranchantes*, is scarcely differentiated in form or content from the landscapes.) The forms mount up over us like a cliff, and as our eye moves over them we have the sensation of clambering up a cliff face. What we know about the density of these forms, about their stability and their instability, their resistance and their give, is what we know through our imagined contact with their surface. It is as if we were blind. We do not see the landscape, we see the paint: the paint conveys what we would know and would not know if we were in the landscape, blind. The paint does not refer to an experience; the experience is precipitated in the paint. Soutine, wrote Hess, 'can seal the mysteries of nature within the mysteries of paint'.

But Soutine evidently saw the high Céret style as an *impasse*. Thirty years later, a great figurative painter of the next generation, de Kooning, was to see how – or so it would appear from his *Woman* series of the early Fifties and the landscapes that followed – to profit from the example of the *Cérets* – their slashing brushwork, their freely overlapping reds and greens, their flat yet broken cliff-wall of paint rearing up parallel to the picture-plane. But the cliff-wall was what Soutine had to eliminate. In doing so and opening up his space, he virtually chose to become more of a traditional than a typically twentieth-century painter. Therefore, although in some ways the transition that occurred at this time was not much more violent than the analogous transition – from flatness to spaciousness – in Vuillard's style around 1900, in other ways this transition can be seen as representing a major decision – almost an act of abdication. Perhaps, it was, after all, a conversion, for all that it did not involve any such change of method or basically of subject-matter such as often accompanies conversion. And inasmuch as it was, Soutine's later revulsion against the *Cérets* can be seen, not simply as a dislike taken to morbid lengths of supposedly immature work, nor even as manifesting a resentful suspicion that his earlier work had had more vitality than his current production, but also as an act of faith in the outlook on painting to which he had been converted.

In the period of transition from Céret to Cagnes style, Soutine produced at least two of his most mysterious and tragic landscapes, works in which there is a quite unearthly tension between surface shape and three-dimensional space – the Rübel collection's *Hill at Céret* (No. 19, pl. 10) and the List collection's *Landscape with Cypresses* (No. 21, pl. 11) which the presence of the cypresses, also found in the Rübel picture, suggests was painted at Céret but which has the sort of lay-out associated with paintings of Cagnes. By 1923 Cagnes style was fully formed, in portraiture as well as landscape.

Cagnes style differs from Céret style in that its rhythms are more curvilinear, less abrupt, and in that it opens, instead of asserts, the picture-plane. The houses in the *Cagnes* are not dirty-white patches of paint but solid volumes in space. They are solids mauled and twisted by the swirling spiral rhythms that shape them. These rhythms do not animate the painting – as the rhythms in the *Cérets* do – so much as the objects depicted in the painting: as Tuchman puts it, 'the *houses* are now anthropomorphic, rather than the strokes'. The houses and trees take on a fairy-tale quality, reminiscent of Chagall or even of Disney, which is far removed from the unnerving fantastic overtones of the *Cérets*. This descent from the sublime to the whimsical is due to a failure of scale. The *Cérets* make us feel puny; the *Cagnes* seem composed of model houses and trees: the *Cagnes* houses might have been moulded by a pair of human hands; the *Cérets* are not moulded, they mould us.

I think that this failure of scale in the *Cagnes* may occur because the drawing and the treatment of space are ill-matched. Soutine was to use a deep space in the series, painted in the mid-Thirties, of a house among trees – of which the finest is the *House at Oisème* in the Emerson collection (No. 47, pl. 28) – and here there is no failure of scale. The form of the house, with its slight rhythmic distortion, does not seem imposed from outside; it seems determined by a tension between its shell and the energy contained within it. Here Soutine achieves the sort of plastic realization of form that gives conviction to volumes disposed in an illusory space – and along with conviction, scale. In the Cagnes

landscapes, on the other hand, there is an illusion of space and an illusion of volume but the shapes of the individual volumes and the relations between them are determined by *linear* rhythms. They are linear rhythms similar to those of certain late landscapes of van Gogh. But van Gogh's calligraphy lies on the surface of the canvas; Soutine's goes swirling through his illusory space. Consequently, the forms are neither held firm at the level of the picture-surface nor hold themselves firm as self-sufficient plastic entities in space. They look as if someone had pushed and pulled them about and left them there.

It seems to me that the major successes of the Cagnes period are mostly among the portraits and still lifes, and that this is at least partly because the motif imposes a shallow space that suits the continuous flowing line. The skate rearing up behind the table in the still life from the Miestchaninoff collection (illus. Wheeler, p. 75), the figure seated very near the beholder of the *Woman in red* (No. 24, pl. 14), are pretexts for the undulating all-embracing line to map one large flat shape parallel to and close to the picture-plane. And it is not, perhaps, fortuitous that the Cagnes landscape which is undoubtedly the finest of the series in every way is the one that is flattest in conception. This is the example in the Castaing collection (illus. Wheeler, p. 63). The marvellous lightness of the stroking, the radiance of the whites veined with red and blue, give it a luminous airiness, a purity, a serenity even, that astonishingly call to mind the streets in the backgrounds of Central Italian pictures of the mid-fifteenth century.

One can well imagine how, quite suddenly finding himself able to paint with such command, above all with such *grace*, Soutine, the poor boy from an Eastern ghetto who had come to the capital of the art world to learn to be a great painter, must have supposed that he had begun to be a painter only once he had acquired this sort of technical mastery, must have been stricken by a deep shame at the sight of his earlier turgid fumblings. There was a *parvenu*'s anxiety to forget his past plus a *parvenu*'s worship of technical virtuosity behind Soutine's revulsion against the *Cérets*. But there was also the choice he made about 1923 – made it virtually then, consciously rather later, perhaps – in favour of a basically traditional as against a basically twentieth-century style. There is, of course, a link between the taste for tradition and the taste for virtuosity, for again and again – in Picasso's collages, in Duchamp's large glass, in Mondrian, in late Klee, in Rothko, in Matisse's *papiers collés* – an essential manifestation of twentieth-century style has involved a deliberate negation of 'painterly' virtuosity. And the stand that Soutine came to assume against modern art – his contempt not only for the Cubist, especially, and Fauvist traditions but also for van Gogh and Cézanne – can also be seen in terms of a *parvenu* mentality.

This painter of genius came from an Eastern ghetto where there was not simply no background of painting but a positive hostility to painting, so that painting for him was not just a luxury but a forbidden fruit. The act of painting was a magical activity, a weaving of spells, and, since it happened that he could weave spells which by any standards were unusually potent, he was bound to display the powers he had appropriated. He would want to find a style in which they would not be wasted but could be paraded in all their glory, and obviously the best opening would be a traditional sort of style, sonorous in colour, rich in impasto, and – this above all, perhaps, for a child of orthodox Jewry – providing the opportunity to show off his skill in producing recognizable representations. Moreover, he lacked the sophistication demanded by any artist who is to work easily in a twentieth-century idiom. In the first place, he couldn't see the theoretical problems that have troubled and exhilarated modern artists: thus in 1938 he told René Gimpel that Cubism was cerebral, incapable of giving joy, that Cézanne, in whom he had once believed, was too stiff, too recondite, too difficult, too mental. Secondly, he lacked sophistication in the sense of bored over-familiarity with the masterpieces of the European tradition hanging in the museums, paid lip-service to by parents and other bourgeois, and providing criteria of artistic respectability which must be shot at. For Soutine, in his innocence, museum pictures were *real* pictures, and his own pictures ought to look like them.

In particular, they ought to look like Rembrandts. Rembrandt always seems to have an extraordinary attraction for Jewish painters – by which I don't mean all painters who are Jews but those who picture themselves as Jewish artists: painters or sculptors like Joseph Israels, Chagall, Pascin, Lipchitz, Epstein, Shahn, and many others, mostly from Eastern Europe. This could be partly because of a scarcely conscious response to the sympathy with which he painted Jews. It could be partly because of his legend – the idea that as a result of his integrity he became a social outcast. These two things, indeed, seems to have made Rembrandt into a sort of honorary Jew. But there are other reasons, more to do with painting. Jewish painters tend to have an exuberant relish for the manipulation of oil paint: Rembrandt is unequalled in his mastery of paint. Jewish painters tend to adhere to a traditional conception of space, to sidestep or reject Cubist space

and the flat space of Fauvism (this is the essential difference between so-called Jewish Expressionism and Central European Expressionism, which often uses elements of Fauvism and sometimes of Cubism): Rembrandt's pictures look as unlike Cubist pictures or Fauve pictures as anyone could wish. Jewish painters tend to affirm – no, Jewish painters unanimously and vociferously affirm – that art has no business to exist if it does not speak to the onlooker of the miseries and occasionally the triumphs of human existence: Rembrandt, above all the great masters, is unashamedly a painter with 'soul'.

A late Soutine in the Castaing collection of a little girl wearing a red dress, late-Rembrandtesque in colour and impasto, achieves something of the peculiar tenderness we associate with the Brunswick *Family* and *The Jewish Bride* (the picture Soutine is said to have admired above all others). Soutine had the usual twentieth-century bias towards Rembrandt's late style, and his paraphrase of the National Gallery *Woman bathing* transforms this small painting of the mid-Fifties, much of it rather tightly painted, into a large canvas very broadly painted in a rough parody of Rembrandt's last manner. No other painter since van Gogh has used a Rembrandtesque idiom with such command.

Rembrandt's influence on Soutine first became effective about 1924–5 and seems to have been what showed him the way to the more plastic and monumental style that deposed the linear style of the Cagnes period. For the crucial works in this new development were surely the series of a carcass of beef inspired by the Rembrandt in the Louvre. From now on the still lifes are no longer diagonally swirling designs gathering up a variety of elements. They are centralized compositions in which a single carcass of an animal or a fowl – or, later, a fish – is realized as a compact mass in space. Where this new emphasis on weight gives way – as in some of the paintings of poultry – to violent movement, the movement is never from one side or corner of the canvas to the opposite side or corner; it is centrifugal. The same bias towards centralized composition is found in the portraits in an increasing preference for frontality of pose and symmetry of lay-out. It seems likely that Soutine had certain Rembrandt portraits, especially self-portraits, in mind. But perhaps he had simply come to have an instinctive preference for centralized composition; every one of the small number of landscapes he carried out between 1925 and 1934 – namely, the intermittently-painted versions of the *Tree of Vence* and the *Chartres Cathedral* (No. 46) – are, unlike virtually all their predecessors, symmetrical designs. The point about Rembrandt's influence on Soutine is not how much it can be discerned in the lay-out of particular works, or even in the mood of particular works, as its impact upon his whole approach to painting from 1925-on: as to technique, an extremely broad, free handling of paint within the framework of a bourgeois representational manner; as to content, the desire to present an isolated creature, living or dead, in a way that would show it as noble, vulnerable, ordinary.

There were only two other painters for whom Soutine is reputed to have felt any warmth in his mature years: Courbet – him in particular – and Corot. And Courbet's influence upon him was probably greater than Rembrandt's, especially during the last ten years of his life. Colour, composition, the fat juicy look of the paint, show it strongly in works as diverse as the *House at Oisème* of *c.* 1934, *The Oak* of 1941 (No. 55), the *Landscape, Champigny* of 1943 (No. 57), the *Plucked Goose* of 1933 (No. 45), the *Salmon* of 1933 in the Colin collection (illus. Wheeler, p. 86), the *Woman reading* of *c.* 1936–37 (No. 50, pl. 27) – not to mention actual paraphrases of Courbet paintings such as *The little Calf* of 1934 (illus. Wheeler, p. 87) and *The Siesta* of 1934 (illus. Wheeler, p. 89). One of the most interesting cases of Courbet's influence on him is a painting the idea for which came from Rembrandt's *Woman bathing* – not the paraphrase, mentioned above, which was painted in 1931, but a half-length version done about 1929 (No. 39, pl. 26). The figure, though cut off short, is actually closer in pose to Rembrandt's than the figure in the full-length version. Only, whereas the full-length is close to Rembrandt in style, the half-length looks to have come straight out of Courbet (despite the reminder of Titian in her ape-like width of shoulder).

What Soutine liked about Courbet, he told René Gimpel, was that he was 'direct'; Corot gave him the 'same sensation of immediate contact with things'. It is significant that this feeling for Courbet and Corot was one that Soutine shared with André Derain, who, also, came to turn his back on 'modern' art – at about the same time as Soutine did – though by reasoning rather than by instinct, or one might say through an excess of sophistication rather than a lack of it. The point is that Courbet and Corot were the last great masters before the beginning of modern art. They are the most accessible of the old masters. Courbet, certainly, has in many ways a sensibility which the twentieth century can easily make contact with, in a sense that Delacroix has not (I am talking about them as painters; as theorists it's probably the other way about). But his aesthetic is not modern, it is closer to Titian's and Rembrandt's than it is to Cézanne's. Impressionism is the

great divide. In a sense there is a larger gulf between Courbet and Monet – even the Monet of the later Seventies, certainly of the Eighties – than there is between Monet and Jackson Pollock. That Courbet and Monet were alike concerned to paint what they could see while Pollock's marks were self-determined – even this difference, which is scarcely negligible, counts for little. What does count is that Courbet painted *things* and Monet painted *sensations*. And as soon as the painter starts to paint sensations, his canvas becomes an entity of quite another order than that of a painter of things. It ceases to be a sort of window; it becomes a sort of grid. It interposes between the painter and his motif an autonomous structure which, instead of effacing itself, asserts itself, because its rhythm and texture are meant to be the equivalents, embodiments, of the rhythm and texture, so to speak, of the painter's sensations. The marks on the canvas become opaque instead of transparent, and their internal homogeneity becomes more important than the heterogeneity of the different elements represented by the picture – and it is this internal homogeneity of the marks that makes a Monet more like a Pollock than a Courbet in aesthetic conception. In other words, in an Impressionist painting or a post-Impressionist – in the broadest sense – painting, a tree and the sky behind it are meant to look more like each other than unlike each other. In a pre-Impressionist painting – Courbet being the last great pre-Impressionist – a tree is one sort of thing and the sky is another; the different things represented are disparate entities, not adjacent areas in the field of vision.

Soutine is one of the two important cases in twentieth-century painting of conversion to pre-Impressionism; the other is Derain. But Soutine has nothing of Derain's eclecticism, and a painter with whom he is more closely related is one who always was a pre-Impressionist, Utrillo; the affinity is obvious in any Soutine picture with buildings done after 1925 – the *Tree of Vence* series, the *House at Oisème*, the *Chartres Cathedral*. Utrillo, however, no more than Derain, does not use paint with a comparable freedom. In any event, Soutine's imagery is less often reminiscent of that of his contemporaries – leaving aside his imitators – than of Courbet and even of his contemporaries, the Barbizon School. The dark green has a lot to do with it. Wheeler has suggested that the late pictures of pairs of children walking could have been inspired by a small Courbet of two children on the beach at St Aubain which Soutine had known and admired ten years earlier. But one of the versions, the one in the Guérin collection (No. 52, pl. 31) also recalls the moonlit landscape with figures by Théodore Rousseau in the Lane Bequest – not that the poetic magic of the Rousseau encompasses the Soutine's tragic intimations. But, beyond the imagery inspired by Courbet – the girls dressed in white, the trees in dark green, and so forth – there is the shared feeling for fat impasto and for the way it can symbolize the density of matter.

Yet there remains that freedom in Soutine's handling, a boldness and arbitrariness used even within the framework of a pre-Impressionist idiom, which belongs to this century and lay beyond the compass of Courbet's conception of what painting could be. There is, for all that, a maverick Courbet, a small picture of the head of a slaughtered pig, painted in 1869, in the Guérin collection (illustrated in the catalogue of the recent Philadelphia exhibition), in which the brushmarks are as arbitrary, as brutal, as ambiguous as those of any Soutine. It is as if Courbet had anticipated exactly what Soutine would take from him and how he would use it. The picture would have been Soutine's masterpièce if he had painted it.

Freedom of handling is one of the things that makes Soutine a modern painter: the other is his instinct to paint the motif in close-up. (The exceptions are certain landscapes of *c.* 1923–5 and *c.* 1934–5.) It is not only that the distant areas of a scene are brought forward towards the picture-plane (which is what distinguishes the late Champigny landscapes from Courbet's forest scenes); it is also that what lies on the picture-plane tends to be at a minimal distance from the eye. Soutine's proclivity towards seeing things in close-up is most clearly evident – though in any case it is quite apparent enough for no such systematic proof to be needed – in his paraphrases of other painters' compositions. Courbet's girl reclining by the Seine is observed by someone seated several feet away; Soutine's is seen as if by someone bending to offer her a cigarette. Rembrandt's paddling woman is magnified by Soutine so as almost to fill out the whole canvas, as if she were looming up over the beholder like a mother about to pick up her child. Rembrandt shows the carcass of beef within a setting, an interior with a girl in the background peeping round a door; in Soutine's paraphrases, there is no room for anything but the carcass – the carcass *is* the setting.

Now, for one reason or another, close-up seems to be the natural distance from his motif of the twentieth-century painter. It is not fortuitous that the famous long-shots of twentieth-century painting are the endless beaches of the type of Surrealism whose conception of space is a deliberate negation of the twentieth century's and is, moreover, a nostalgic symbol of history – space meaning time. The close-up view is an inevitable consequence of the twentieth century's predilection for flat and simple design. Its affective implications can vary. It can aggran-

dize. Most often it signifies a refusal to maintain 'a respectful distance', expresses a will to intimacy, whether that of sympathy or that of insolence: either way it is anti-heroic; it probes. In Soutine's work it seems to have another meaning. Close-up first becomes important to him in those Céret landscapes of *c.* 1920–21 such as the *Gorge du Loup* (No. 11) and the *Gnarled Trees* (No. 15, pl. 6) where the forms loom up over the painter, menacing him. As if fearing attack from them, he assaults them and bends them to his will.

And this becomes Soutine's pattern (one that is highly consistent with what we know of his personality) – to put himself in a position from which he feels that the object is threatening him, so that he must attack it, wrestle with it, twist it, wring its neck. It is as if he can only make contact with reality through an act of violence and violation. It is painting as a form of in-fighting. His frenzied brush – in using which, we recall, he once dislocated his thumb – is a weapon and his paint a magical substance with which to obliterate and re-mould the contours of the object. In the portraits he produces terrible distortions of the head and contortions of the body, resembling those which Wajda's camera, in *Kanal*, imposes on the uniformed creatures struggling through the sewers. In the best of the landscapes and still lifes, however – such as *The Big Tree* at São Paolo or the *Gnarled Trees* and many other *Cérets* or the *Hanging Turkey* (No. 36, pl. 21) – he can take this assault on the object's identity further. Here its identity is no longer tortured: it is torn apart. It is no tree, no dead bird. The paint has become a nameless organism heaving and stuttering with life, writhing in the throes of love or death.

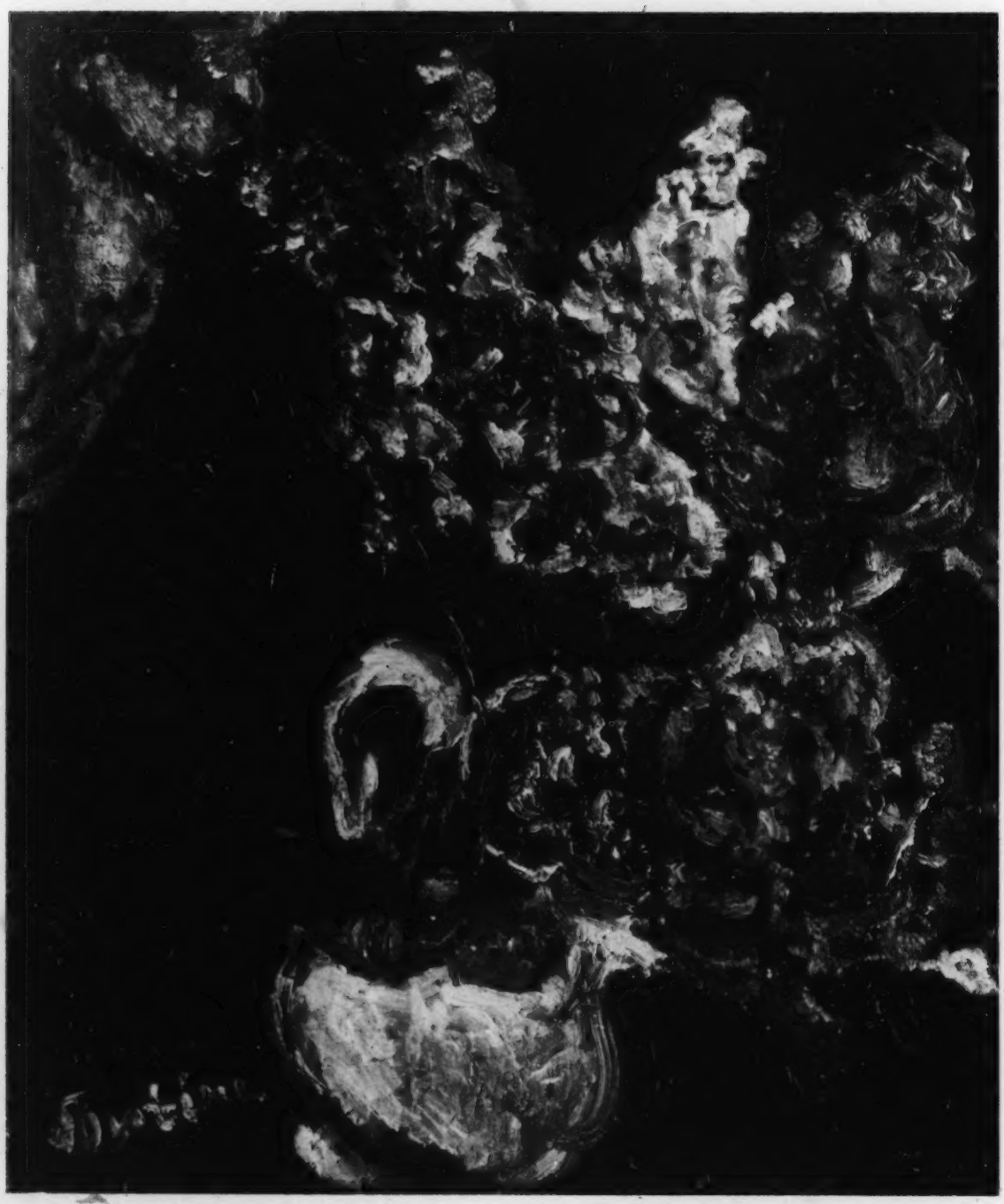
Soutine is an artist whose stature is extraordinarily difficult to assess, as before assessing any artist's work in relation to that of other artists, it is necessary to assess its own parts in relation to each other, and in Soutine's case there has never been an opportunity to do this properly. No representative exhibition of Soutine has yet been put together – an exhibition in which every stage in his career was adequately represented and which also included drawings, of which at least a few are extant. The present exhibition includes a very high proportion of his finest works up to 1929 (that is, of the first half precisely of his painting life – the major omission, by the way, is the Stedelijk's *Carcass of Beef*) but is able to show only a token representation of his work after that date. The unavailability for exhibition of most of the best of Soutine's later paintings (many of which are not even published) is particularly regrettable in view of the long debate as to whether his work declined or advanced with time. It is a debate the urgency of which is shown by the artist's own participation in it as a wholesale butcher of his early works. Some of Soutine's most fervent admirers accept his valuation of the *Cérets*; others see them as the high point of his art. The present exhibition includes perhaps the finest selection of *Cérets* ever assembled under one roof. It also includes a few of the best late landscapes. But there is an imbalance which must preclude confident comparison. What the exhibition – like others held before it – is lacking in most of all is a satisfactory representation of the figure-paintings of the 1930s. Until more such paintings as the *Woman reading* are shown alongside earlier works, talk of Soutine will remain talk about an unknown quantity.

Regardless of this, Soutine must always be an enigmatic figure inasmuch as his work combines qualities of a very high order indeed with deficiencies of a most elementary kind. It is probably safe to say that he produced the best paintings done by any artist born during the last eighty years – since the birth of the great Cubists. The question is how he stands by comparison with Bonnard and Vuillard, Matisse and Mondrian, Braque and Picasso.

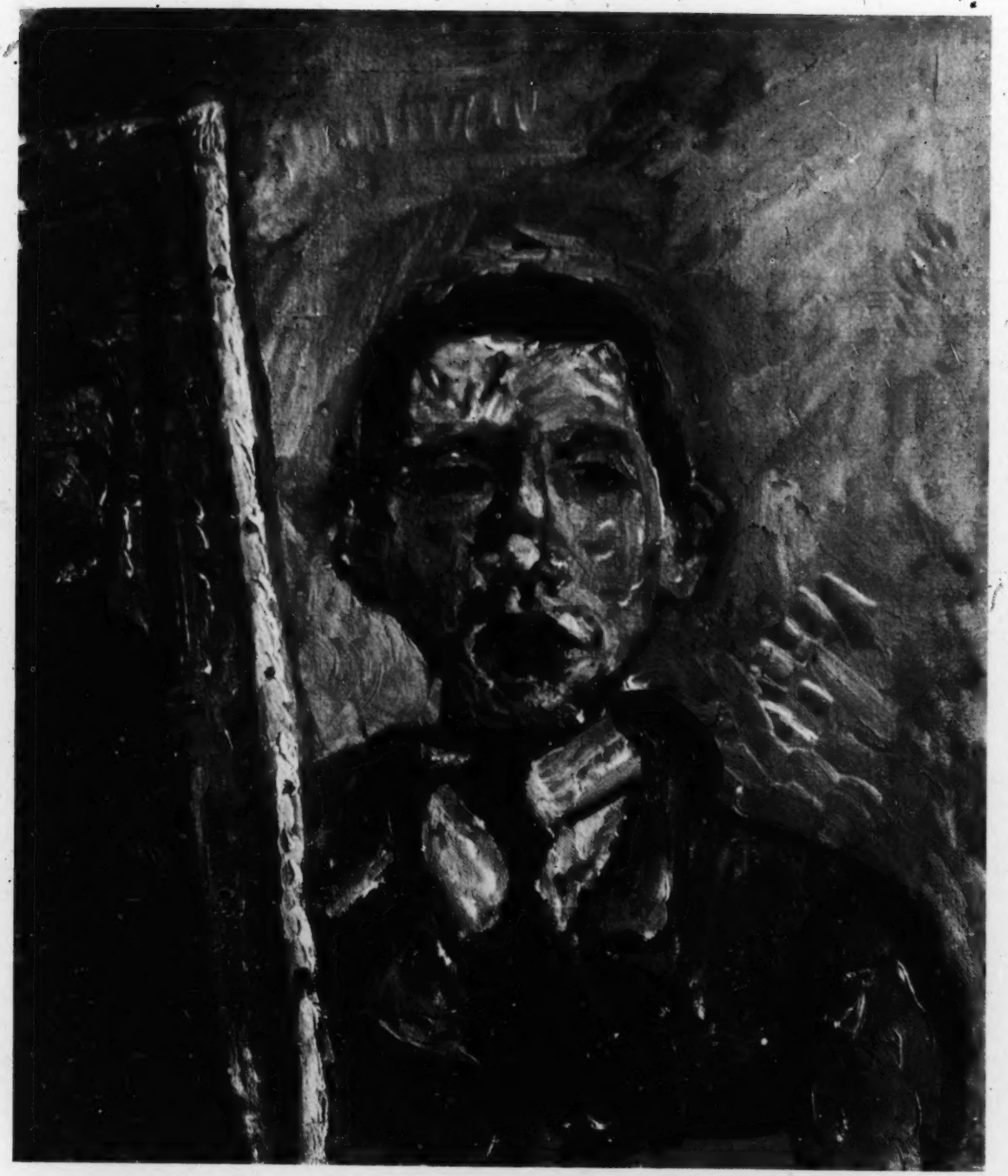
In some ways he is overwhelmed by the disadvantages of not having been born into a great and living tradition of painting; in other ways, perhaps, by the destructiveness of his neuroses. He rarely manages to sustain the same level of energy and intensity of handling over the whole area of a canvas. Next to a passage which is sheer inspiration there will be a passage through which he vamps along hoping for the best. He is often at a loss to know how to keep the thing going across a transition from volume to space. He never achieves that total vibration of a Matisse or a Bonnard canvas by which every shape, every mark, is continuously sending out reverberations to the edges of the rectangle and getting them back, so that wave upon wave of life fills out the picture. And then Soutine seems to have been blissfully unaware that there is a right physical size for every image. He took great pains to get hold of canvases with the sort of surface he wanted, never painting when he could help it on a virgin canvas but on top of old paintings, two or three centuries old for preference. But he seems to have given little or no thought to the size of his canvas, whether it was right for a particular painting. The scale of his pictures is monotonous and meaningless. So that a group of paintings by this master hanging together has something of the look of a student's efforts.

Yet he possesses two of the supreme qualities a painter can have. The impact of his paint upon our nervous system is a tragic impact,

1. Portrait of the painter Richard, *c.* 1916–17 (2)



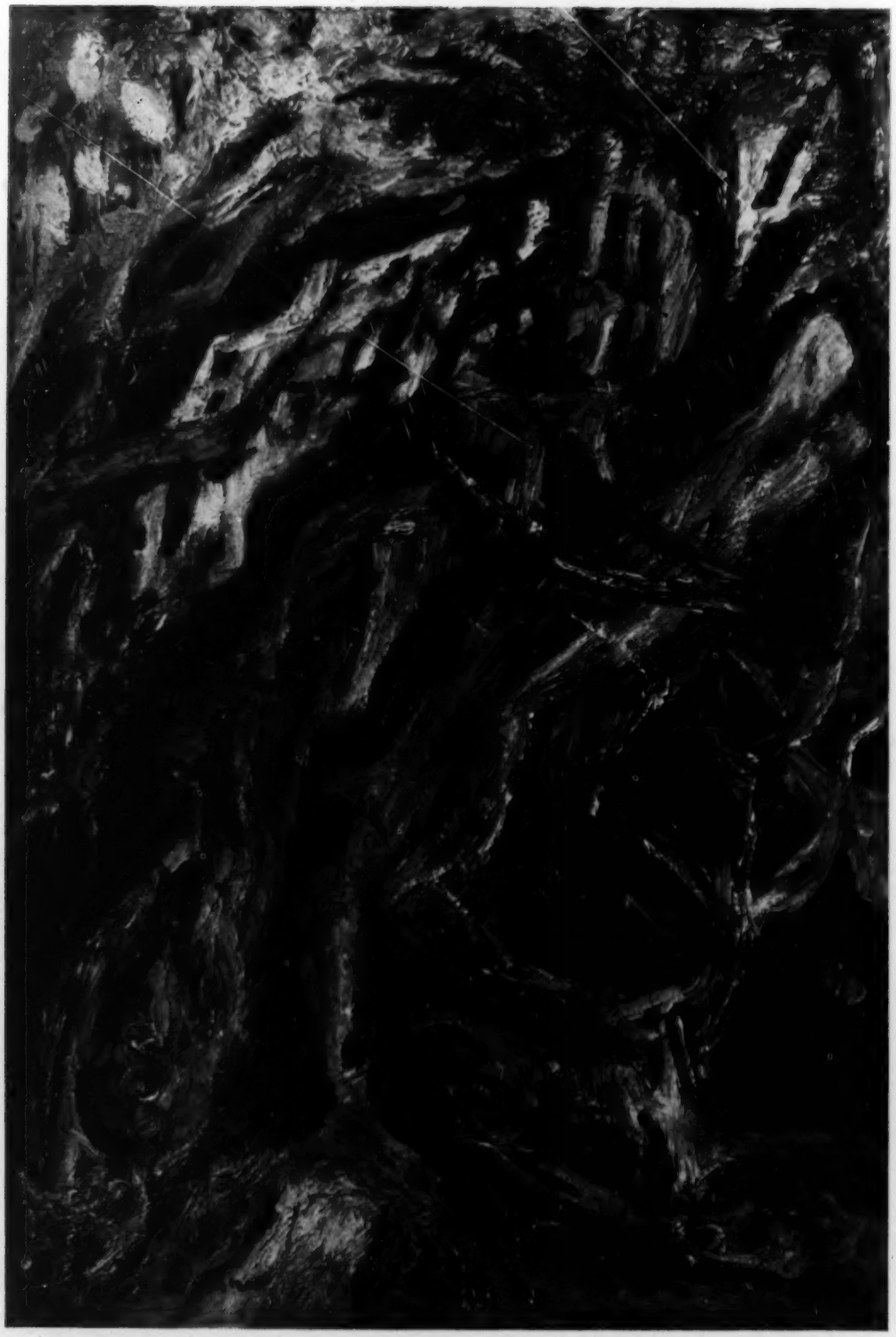
2. Jug with Lilacs, *c.* 1917–18 (4)



3. Self Portrait, *c.* 1918 (6)

4. Trees at Céret, *c.* 1919 (8)

5. Landscape at Céret, *c.* 1920–21 (14)



6. Gnarled Trees, Céret, *c.* 1921 (15)

7. Hill at Céret, *c.* 1921 (16)

8. Village Square, Céret, *c.* 1921–22 (17)

9. Red Roofs, Céret, *c.* 1921–22 (18)

10. Hill at Céret, *c.* 1922 (19)

11. Landscape with Cypresses, *c.* 1922–23 (21)

12. Man Praying, c. 1920–21 (10)

13. The Apprentice, *c.* 1922 (20)

14. Woman in Red, *c.* 1923 (24)

15. Houses at Cagnes, *c.* 1924 (30)

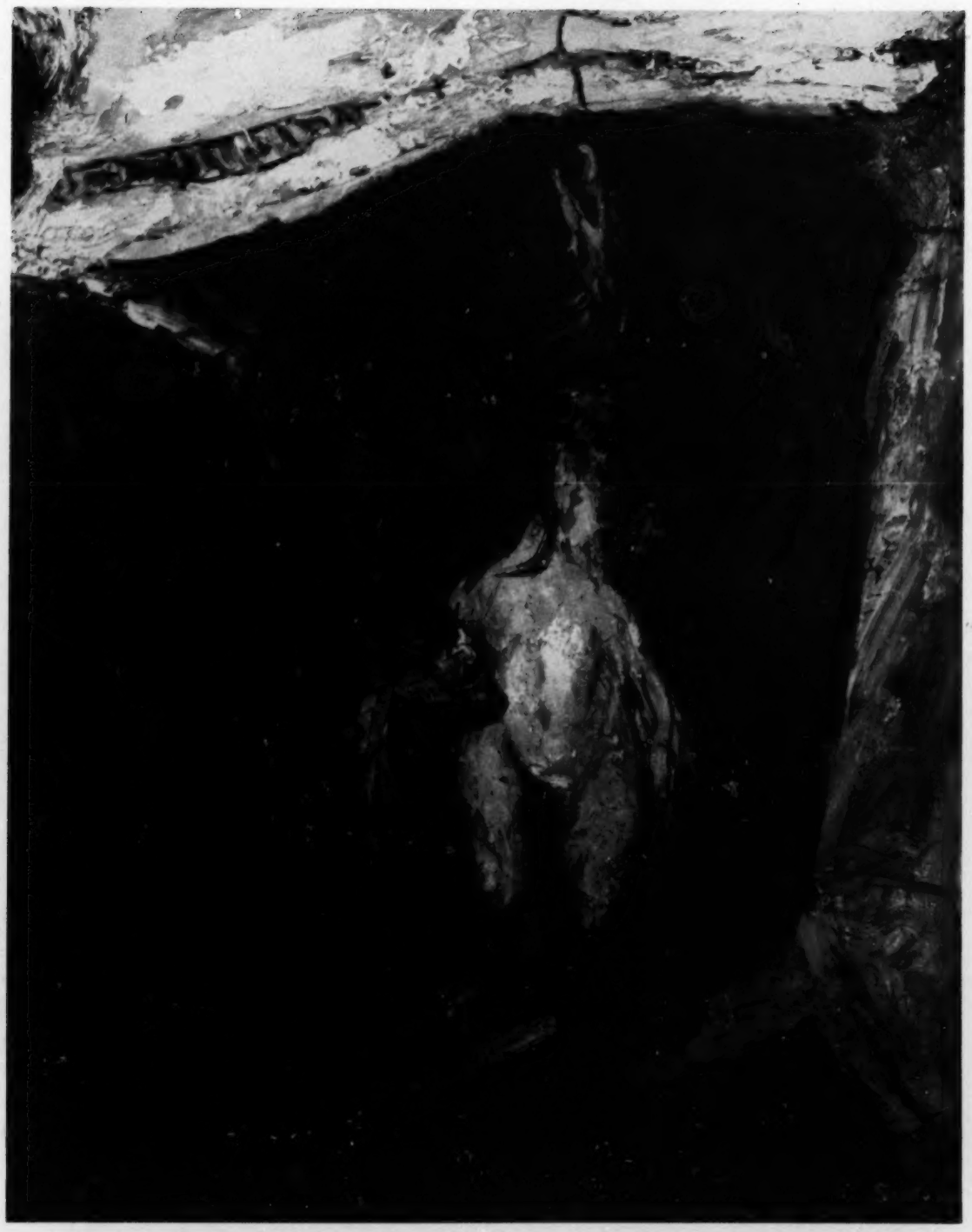
16. Still Life with Red Meat, *c.* 1925–24 (27)

17. Fish and Tomatoes, *c.* 1925 (32)

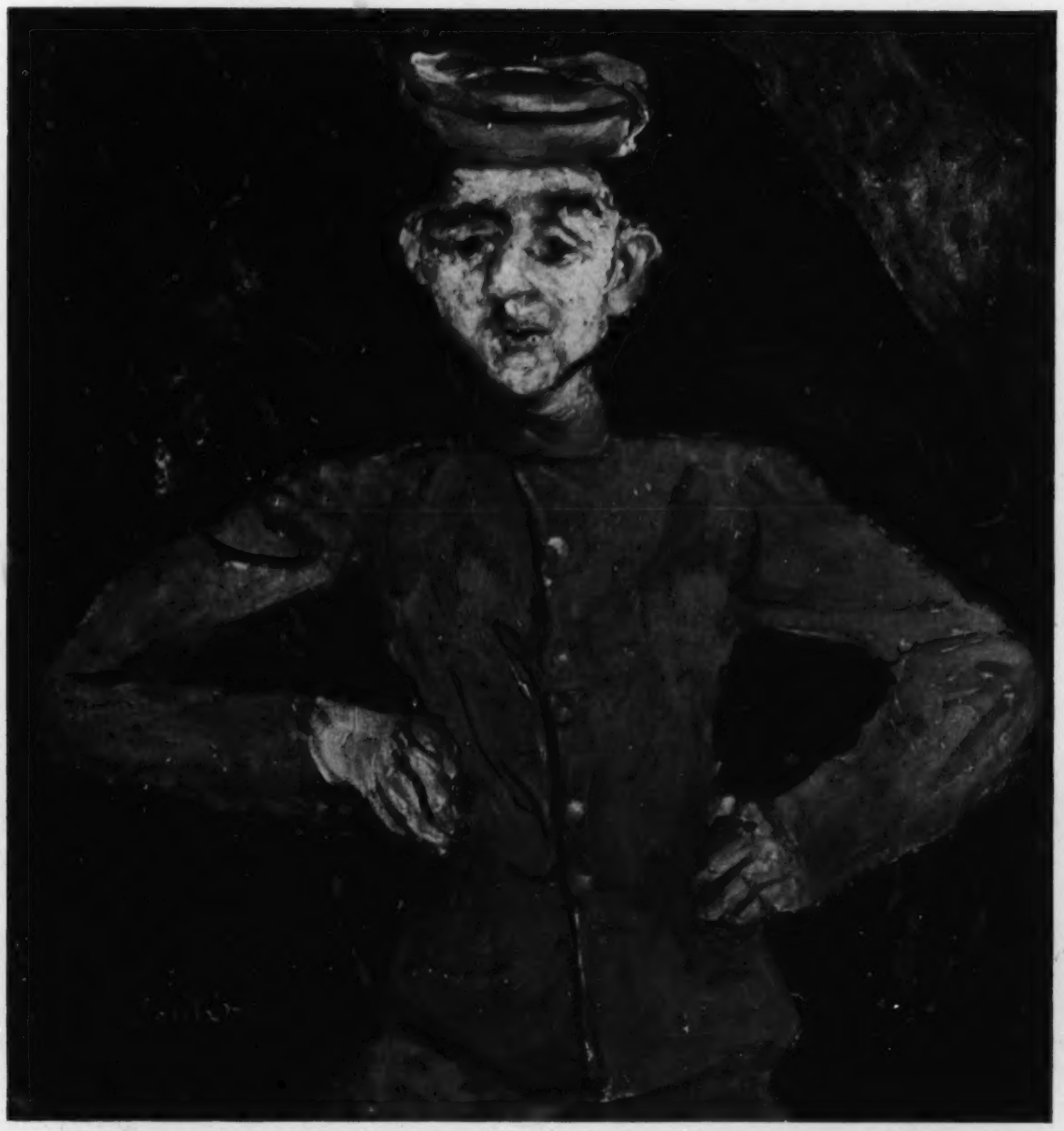
18. Beef and Calf's Head, *c.* 1924 (28)

19. Carcass of Beef, *c.* 1925 (54)

20. Fowl, *c.* 1926 (37)



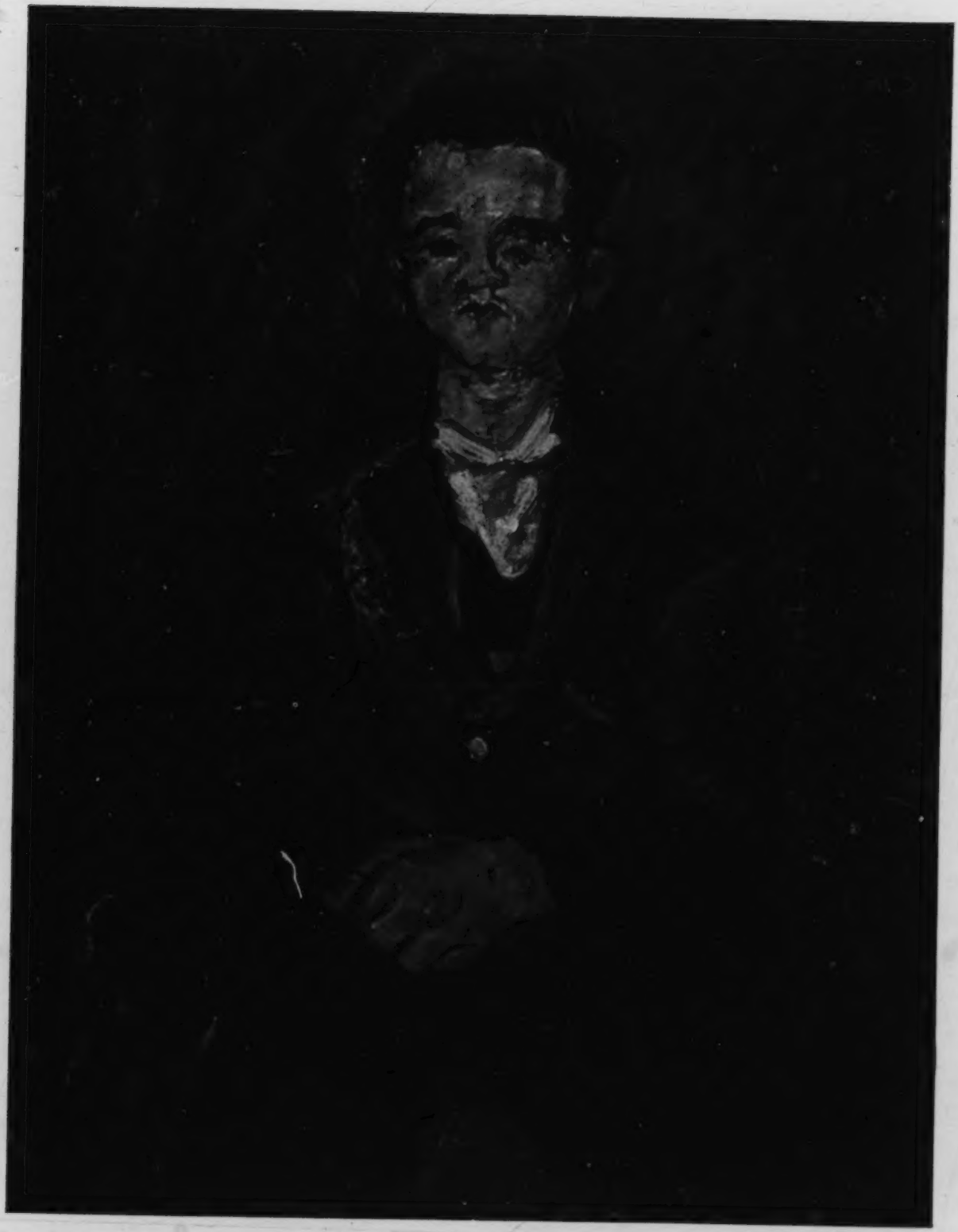
21. Hanging Turkey, *c.* 1926 (36)



23. Pageboy at Maxim's, *c.* 1926 (38)

22. The Communicant, *c.* 1925 (35)

24. Portrait of Madeleine Castaing, *c.* 1928 (40)



25. Portrait of a Boy in Blue, 1929 (42)

26. Woman Bathing, *c.* 1927 (39)

27. Woman Reading, *c.* 1936–37 (50)

28. House at Oisème, 1934 (47)

29. Alley of Trees, 1936 (49)

30. Windy Day, Auxerre, 1939 (55)

31. Two Children on the Road, 1939 (52)

32. Landscape with Reclining Figure, Champigny, *c.* 1942 (56)

whatever that may mean. And his paint as it lies there on the canvas appears to act like a miraculous teeming substance that actually generates life under our eyes. It is as if, as we look, matter and energy were being continually churned out by the paint, were forever being renewed by it. Rembrandt creates this illusion; so too do Titian, Chardin, Bonnard. Soutine is such another.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Chaim Soutine was born at Smilovitchi, near Minsk, in Lithuania, in 1893*. In 1910 he went to Vilna, where he attended art school for three years. In 1913 he arrived in Paris, where he studied in the Atelier Cormon at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He had a studio at the Cité Falguière, then from 1916 at La Ruche. In 1918 he paid his first visit to Cagnes and the following year his first to Céret, where he was to work for the greater part of the next three years, with intermittent stays in Paris and Cagnes. In the winter of 1922–23, a large number of his paintings were bought by Dr Albert C. Barnes, and from this time on, after suffering extreme poverty all his life, he always enjoyed financial security. From 1923 to 1925 he worked principally in Paris and Cagnes-sur-mer. Thereafter until 1940 he worked mainly in Paris. From 1931 to 1935 he spent the summers on the property at Lèves, near Chartres, of his patrons Marcellin and Madeleine Castaing; later summers were spent at Auxerre and elsewhere. The pressures of the Occupation forced Soutine, as a Jew, to leave Paris. He finally settled down in 1941 at Champigny-sur-Veuldre in Touraine. In the summer of 1943 he had an especially serious attack of the stomach ulcer from which he had suffered throughout most of his adult life. He was driven to Paris for treatment but died after an operation on August 9, 1943.

* Soutine's birthdate of 1893, in contradiction to the previously accepted 1894, has lately been established by M. Pierre Courthion, to whom we are greatly obliged for permission to anticipate his publication of this discovery.

CATALOGUE

Monroe Wheeler's catalogue of the New York Museum of Modern Art exhibition in 1950 provides the most accurate account of Soutine's development. Exception can be taken only with Wheeler's dating within certain stylistic periods, especially Céret. No writer, however, has yet suggested a means of distinguishing early from middle or late Céret pictures, for example, or determined the formal evolution of the subsequent works executed at Cagnes. Writers other than Wheeler have avoided dating Soutines altogether or have posited dates a decade or more off the mark. Even Elie Faure's little monograph (*Soutine*, Paris, Crès, 1929), written rather early in Soutine's career by a brilliant art historian who knew the artist personally, contains surprising misdates of then recent paintings. In 1959 the Galerie Charpentier mounted the largest exhibition of Soutine ever organized, but the catalogue gave a confused picture of Soutine's chronology. Such confusion, in prohibiting a clear view of Soutine's art, has served to aggravate the often notorious problems of forgeries and false attributions. Few modern painters have suffered as Soutine has from the recurrent vitiation of their art by spurious ascriptions. The fact that many scores of important Soutines, concentrated in a few private collections, have never been exhibited or photographed, has also obscured our view of the painter and has facilitated the acceptance of false works or of works begun by Soutine, discarded, and completed by other hands. Incidentally, Soutine rarely signed his paintings, though there is a signature on many paintings by him. He himself agreed to having Zborowski, his first dealer, and two or three other individuals sign pictures for him. A certain naïve script, with slowly and meticulously turned characters and less nervous and angular than his signature on letters, is typical of his own signature on paintings.

The present chronology is, in part, a conjectural scheme often based solely on considerations of style. Certain datings are still provisional. It is hoped that the exhibition itself, along with the ascriptions here offered, will encourage students to correct and clarify our knowledge of Soutine's art at each point in its evolution.

MAURICE TUCHMAN

All exhibits are oil on canvas unless otherwise indicated.

In the measurements, height precedes width and inches are followed by centimetres.

References to illustrations elsewhere are intended simply to identify exhibits not illustrated here, so that only one reference is given for any work and this to the most accessible rather than the most ambitious reproduction.

The letter L in a catalogue entry denotes that the picture will be shown in London only.

1 Still Life with Lemons *c.* 1916 L

25¾ x 21¼ (65·5 x 54)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Collectors Choice XI*, London, Gimpel Fils Gallery, January, 1962, p. 23

One of a type of early still life (of which few have come down to us) which present a dark wine bottle and glass, a plate with an item of food on it, a spoon or fork, and one or two other items varying from picture to picture, all seen frontally on an upturned table-top. The objects are carefully and somewhat awkwardly arranged; typical of both qualities is the manner in which the edge of the plate meets the bottom of the vase. Cézanne's palette and sustained use of subtle distortions for surface tensions seems to have affected Soutine considerably in these early years. Most individually realized is the fork, which quivers and trembles as if alive, and anticipates the anthropomorphically grasping utensils encountered in slightly later still lifes.
Mr and Mrs Irving Levick, Buffalo, N.Y.

2 Portrait of the Painter Richard *c.* 1916–17

21¾ x 17¾ (55 x 45)
Plate 1

Soutine here commences his struggle to transform objective appearance into a world of pervasively convoluted form. His only means at this stage is the occasional exaggeration of natural irregularities—the sloping hairline, the high, protruding cheekbone and ear. The curvilinear gyrations of the background may be interpreted as symbolic of his wish to make real forms take on their free, spontaneous quality.

Living at this time in *La Ruche*, a crowded sanctuary for political refugees and artists (including Lipchitz, Archipenko, Zadkine, Chagall, Léger) Soutine frequently had painters sit for him.
McRoberts & Tunnard Ltd., London

3 Flowers on a Chair *c.* 1917

24 x 19¾ (61 x 50)
Illustrated: Emile Szittya, *Soutine et son temps*, Paris, Bibliothèque des Arts, 1955, facing p. 63

Similar in subject and style to the *Still Life with Chair* reproduced in Wheeler, p. 37. Both pictures were influenced by Bonnard's post-impressionist manner of brush-stroking. These still lifes are the the first in Soutine's development in which objects are brought together solely by aesthetic reasoning, their choice not previously being determined by an occasion, i.e., mealtime, or a common view. The unusual iconography—a vase of flowers on a chair—may have been suggested to Soutine by van Gogh's two paintings of chairs with objects on them or by certain pictures of Chagall.
The Josten Collection, New York

4 Jug with Lilacs *c.* 1917–18

21⅝ x 18⅛ (55 x 46·5)
Plate 2

Painted under the influence of Bonnard, this is an early example of a large series of vases of flowers. The subject attracted Soutine until the landscape at Céret provided a more dramatic matrix for his desire, already apparent here, for axial distortion, a tightly-knit surface (here almost a crust) of strong, though muted strokes, strokes possessed of individual weight and purpose.
Mr and Mrs Matthew H. Futter, New York

5 Still Life with Fish *c.* 1918

16⅛ x 25¼ (41 x 64)
Illustrated' Monroe Wheeler, *Soutine*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1950, p. 38.

Several still lifes of *c.* 1917–18 display certain affinities to works of the mid-1920s. For example, comparison of this picture with No. 25 reveals a similar vigorous execution and other resemblances of format, diagonal emphasis and subject. Formal elements which testify to an early date for this painting are: the heaviness and awkwardness of the linear forces, whose mannered curvilinearity is compulsively repeated; the absence, nevertheless, of a unifying, all-embracing rhythm; spatial planes which fail to relate plastically to the picture surface, perhaps because representational space has not yet been successfully eliminated.
Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot, New York

6 Self Portrait *c.* 1918

21⅛ x 18 (54·5 x 46)
Plate 3

Executed with a vehement originality and unity of means, this self portrait is perhaps Soutine's first authoritative image. Wheeler ascribes it to *c.* 1917, other writers to 1916 and 1918; the direct assurance of the image suggests a time close to Soutine's breakthrough at Céret, i.e., *c.* 1918. The energetic agitation of the intertwined movements of the figure's clothes looks forward to the all-over uprootedness of a Céret landscape. Only three other self portraits certain to be authentic (painted at Céret) are known to this writer, although two others are rumoured to exist in a Paris private collection. An unusual fanciful element is the image of a figure painted

on the reverse of the canvas represented in the picture; this may be a self-caricature.
The Henry Pearlman Collection, New York

7 Red Gladioli *c.* 1918–19

25¼ x 20¾ (64 x 53)
Clearly simultaneous with the painting colour-reproduced in Wheeler (p. 13) and with a picture in the collection of Mme Jean Walter, Paris. Soutine's predilection for cut-out shapes, clearly outlined and flatly but sensuously painted, is boldly announced in this picture. Each red shape is a fresh invention, unique and distinct from the others but sharing with them the sense of spasmodic agitation. The picture is a radical but incomplete victory; the *shapes* are possessed of that febrile, pervasive transformation of perceived texture into pigment-skin, but the rest of the canvas surface has a uniform but altogether different character, and operates almost as a traditional background.

Three kinds of linear expression are found here: the gladioli are jagged, abruptly angular; the vase is smoothly flowing and curving; the connecting stems have the impulsive twist of the one and the easy, rhythmic grace of the other. Analogously, the flaming red of the agitated shapes (flowers) is contrasted with the quiet, grey-brown hues of the graceful shape (vase), while the greenish hue of the synthesizing shapes (stems) is vivid yet subdued.
Monsieur and Madame A. N. D., Paris

8 Trees at Céret *c.* 1919

21¼ x 28¾ (54 x 73)
Plate 4
An extremely important type of picture in ascertaining the evolution of the Céret style. This example (entitled *The Forest* in the Ben Uri Gallery catalogue) is one of several similar versions of a view of the village, and is among the first of the series.
This is *early* Céret, which has rarely been seen in exhibitions of or monographs on Soutine. Soutine's embarkation into the world of violent sensation at Céret was precipitated by certain of the last landscapes of van Gogh—hence the emphasis upon linear and repetitive movements and a hint of deep, off-centre perspective. Van Gogh's influence ceased with the development of Soutine's airless, flat space and thick liquid textures, resembling a pervasive skin, but the impetus toward this realm of expressive upheaval provided by van Gogh was crucial for Soutine's eventual achievement.

A sense of uprootedness prevails here, primarily because of the great yearning of the trees for the edges of the canvas. Later versions of the motif depend less on line; they are more subdued in colour but more agitated texturally; each stroke is, further, to be granted individual charge and impulse; and the shapes become more convulsively deformed. Three-dimensional space is maintained through all the versions.
The Ben Uri Art Gallery, London

9 Peasant Boy *c.* 1919–20

24½ x 21 (62 x 53·5)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *The Colin Collection, Paintings, Watercolours, Drawings, and Sculpture*, New York, Knoedler, April–May 1960, pl. 72
We first sense in these early portraits at Céret that 'identity of flesh and pigment' (Sam Hunter) which is to become Soutine's trademark. A recurrent feature of the Céret portraits, tentatively introduced here, is the ambiguous marking of the subject's right shoulder; we cannot be sure exactly where the shoulder ends. In later portraits, the shoulder is drawn two or more distinct ways, while here it is blurred. The shadow behind the figure's head becomes more prominent in subsequent portraits, eventually asserting the force of a second, ghostly presence.
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York

10 Man Praying *c.* 1920–21

36 x 21 (91·5 x 53·5)
Plate 12
Fewer portraits than landscapes were painted at Céret, and these generally have a sense of landscape to them; the man here seems like some organic form threatened and bent by the forces of nature. The profile view is exceptional among these portraits (only one other is known to the writer), but several of the subjects are seen, like this one, in a supplicating pose. Working people from the town, probably attired in their Sunday best, were Soutine's usual sitters.
The Perls Galleries, New York

11 Gorge du Loup *c.* 1920–21

32 x 31 (81 x 79)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *A loan exhibition of Paintings, Watercolours and Sculpture from the collection of Mr and Mrs Henry Pearlman*, New York, Knoedler, January–February 1959, pl. 14
One of the first Céret pictures with an extremely low vantage-point, as if the painter stood beneath a great avalanche of cascading forms. The large zig-zags of the foreground trees represent perhaps the most daring deformation seen thus far in Soutine, especially as these movements deliberately define spatial ambiguities. Never-

theless distinct foreground and background planes are implied here. Compared to *Gnarled Trees*, with which this picture shares a stress upon hurtling diagonals, there is as yet no consistent reduction of near and distant planes into a compressed, unified space. There is a stylistic divergence between the lower two-thirds of the canvas and the upper third (whose houses and trees fail to share in the deformation of the forms below). Also indicative of *c.* 1920–21 (rather than 1922, as dated in the catalogue of the Pearlman collection) are the outlined agitations of the tree in the upper centre which are similar to shapes in certain pre-Céret landscapes of *c.* 1919, e.g., *Montmartre*, illustrated in Wheeler, p. 41.

The elements of disunity found here were later to be resolved in pervasive and total formal convolution. But the picture has a rugged virility and bold strength, and parts of it (the trees) display a fierce tension almost unrivalled in Soutine's subsequent production.

The Henry Pearlman Collection, New York

12 Landscape at Céret *c.* 1920–21

24 x 32 (61 x 81·5)

A series of paintings was based on the notion of dividing the canvas with a diagonal horizon line extending from one corner to the other. This division was complicated with shapes, placed on the foreground plane, which diagonally traverse the field at a perpendicular to the diagonal of the middle-ground.

Here, two long trees sprout from a nearby bank and erupt into ecstatic shapes of foliage, at the point where intersection is made with the reclining landscape and architecture. In pictures such as this one, Soutine was at the brink of total immersion into the all-over agitation and densely packed space of high Céret style (some few months separate this canvas from the *Hill at Céret*, No. 16). The pigment is already thick and sensuous, differing from earlier appearances of heavy impasto, for instance, in early Vlaminck, in its slow, ever-moving wetness.

E. & A. Silberman Galleries, New York

13 Landscape, Céret *c.* 1920–21

21¼ x 36¼ (54 x 92)

Illustrated: Colin, pl. 77

The division of the canvas by a diagonal horizontal line is still apparent here, but is obscured by the inclusion of a house at the left, and by the virtual elimination of sky. The space has become still narrower and more dense, the brushwork more loaded and fluid.

The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Mass. (Gift of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin)

14 Landscape at Céret *c.* 1920–21

24 x 33 (61 x 84)

Plate 5

Soutine's method at this time anticipates the risk-taking of later action painters; success depends on instinctive control of the furious discharging of paint. This fascinatingly knotted canvas represents a striking victory of the method in that its creation seems still to be happening before our eyes.

The crucial difference between this work (and other Céret pictures) and abstract expressionism, lies not so much in that the original inspiration of the painting was 'the configuration of the external world' (as Wheeler suggests), as in the spatial self-containment of the image; here, for example, forms extend to the canvas edge but turn back and re-enter the field.

So intense is the turbulence that only gradually do the distinct derivations from nature come into focus—the trees of the foreground, houses in the middle distance, the background hill. This work is one of the most pervasively agitated of the several versions Soutine painted of this view. But it is also the most perfectly realized, marked by inventions such as the foliage at the upper left (belonging to the foreground tree) which parallels the contour of the distant hill; areas belonging to radically separated spatial planes are thus tied to each other.

Rex de C. Nan Kivell, Esq., London

15 Gnarled Trees, Céret *c.* 1921

38 x 25 (96·5 x 63·5)

Plate 6

The picture exemplifies one aspect of 'high' Céret style: the impulsive unobstructed surge of long diagonals to a point of convergence at the upper right. Contrast to all these extended movements, with their abrupt angular turns, is provided by the curvilinear, flame-like rhythms of the tree at the right. Soutine probably returned to the same motif seen in *Gorge du Loup*, No. 11; perhaps the painter had found some great dramatic concavity in the earth, out of which trees had been violently wrenched.

Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York

16 Hill at Céret *c.* 1921

29 x 21¼ (73·5 x 55)

Plate 7

Wheeler dates this picture *c.* 1919. The *Hill at Céret*, however, with its complex and profuse anthropomorphic elements, marks the high point of Soutine's Céret style. Its impulsive and savage energy was fully realized only after scores of increasingly spontaneous canvases were

painted in and around this village in the French Pyrenees. Pigment is most inventively varied and skilfully controlled, in spite of the vehement, almost frenetic, execution. After this point in Soutine's development, the ferocity of the brush-stroking abates, the jagged angularities of linear movement yield to larger, more curvilinear rhythms.
Mr and Mrs Neil Sellin, New York

17 Village Square, Céret *c.* 1921–22

29¼ x 33½ (76 x 85·5)
Plate 8

Pictures apparently executed later in 1921 begin to assert a predominantly vertical direction while earlier paintings first incline toward a bias and then become essentially vertical; hence a later date than Wheeler's (*c.* 1920) is suggested. Each work has an essential rhythmic sense, either curvilinear and convoluted or angular, jagged, sharply pointed. The rhythm depends on the motif; natural forms become convoluted while man-made, architectural forms become angular. *Village Square* and other basically architectural motifs strike us as expressionistic treatments of scenes first filtered through the eyes of a Cubist painter.
The Henry Pearlman Foundation, New York

18 Red Roofs, Céret *c.* 1921–22

32 x 25¼ (81 x 64·5)
Plate 9

After the complete self-immersion in seeming chaos manifest in certain paintings of 1921, stabilizing elements began to be introduced. These elements detracted in no way from the directness of expression but operated as a sort of architectonic scaffolding for Soutine, granting him a firmer base from which he could continue painting at a high pitch of emotional energy. Here the trees on both sides of the picture act as brackets for the rising cubistic mass of houses. This central portion is similar in overall shape to the *Hill at Céret*, No. 16 (with the angularities suggested by architecture in *Red Roofs* substituting for the curvilinear rhythms of trees and nature) but the symmetrical trees represent a desire for greater formal stability. Thus the date of *c.* 1921–22 is offered here in place of Wheeler's *c.* 1920.
The Henry Pearlman Foundation, New York

19 Hill at Céret *c.* 1922

28¼ x 35½ (72·5 x 91)
Plate 10

The motif is the hill at Céret, but many of the qualities of the picture are probably the result of Soutine's visits to Cagnes. The brighter palette and luminosity relate to the sun-filled landscape of Southern France rather than the heavy, dark atmosphere of the Pyrenees. The vertical basis is now established and with it comes a greater symmetry. Foreshadowing an aspect characteristic of Cagnes pictures is the hint of *entrance* into the landscape—which will become the upward-winding road so frequently encountered.
Mr Peter A. Rübel, New York

20 The Apprentice *c.* 1922

39 x 27 (99 x 68·5)
Plate 13

Transitional in style between Céret and Cagnes portraits, the picture bears the impulsive stroking of the earlier mode and the more rounded forms of the later. Characteristically Cagnes, however, is the tender treatment of the slightly silly face, the tone of serio-comic befuddlement.
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York

21 Landscape with Cypresses *c.* 1922–23

26 x 32 (66 x 87)
Plate 11

Céret and Cagnes characteristics are fused here in an unusual way. The central zone of bare tree and thicket is clearly Céret in subject and treatment. (See No. 11 and No. 13 for corresponding areas.) Typical of Cagnes is the clear demarcation of spatial zones, the physiognomic aspect of the architecture (the *houses* are now anthropomorphic, rather than the strokes), and the inclusion of a reclining figure. Cypresses appear, so far as is known, only in pictures of about 1922. There is a striking resemblance between the foreground and that in *Landscape at Cagnes*, in the Colin Collection (Wheeler, p. 17). While the thicket is dense and airless, the entire picture nevertheless contains a quality of atmosphere related to the greater breadth and expansiveness of Cagnes landscapes.
Mr and Mrs Albert A. List, New York

22 Landscape with Road, Cagnes *c.* 1923

25 x 30 (63·5 x 76)

Much of the Céret mode of vision is still apparent in this landscape painted at Cagnes: a certain vacuity, the compressed agitation of shapes, the broad, liquid strokes, the low vantage-point. The major rhythms are curvilinear, in Cagnes fashion, but they have yet to attain that airy, buoyant, fairy-tale quality of mature Cagnes style. (During the so-called Cagnes period, 1923–25, the artist in part divided his time between Cagnes, towns nearby and Paris, but 'Cagnes style' most effectively distinguishes his work at this stage from later work in Paris.) A

note of dream-like fantasy is introduced by the dancing figure seemingly imbedded in the road, as in several landscapes of this period.
Rex de C. Nan Kivell, Esq., London

23 Side of Beef *c.* 1923

27½ x 20½ (70 x 52)
Illustrated: Wheeler, p. 66
Wheeler writes that Soutine painted pieces of meat as early as 1916–17 (p. 68); no pictures of such a subject and date are, however, known to this writer. This picture of about 1923 is the earliest of this type that is available today.
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York

24 Woman in Red *c.* 1923

25 x 21 (63·5 x 53·5)
Plate 14
Dated *c.* 1922 by Wheeler; the smooth rounded curves of the picture suggest, however, a further distance from the angularity characteristic of Céret. This is one of the first paintings with a large, daring elliptical shape, anticipating the still lifes of the mid-20s. The picture has been cleaned since it was reproduced in Wheeler (p. 55), revealing that an important portion of the hat had been over-painted, almost certainly not by the artist. The retouching had drastically altered the design of the entire canvas by breaking the rhythmic flow from hat through chair and arms and by weakening the forceful oppositions in the face.
Dr and Mrs Harry Bakwin, New York

25 Still Life with Fish, Eggs and Lemons L *c.* 1923

25½ x 31⅞ (65 x 80·5)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Aspects of 20th Century Art*, London, Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., July–August 1962, cat. No. 39
The great crescent shape of the table fills the canvas at right and left sides and is capped by a massive *baguette* of bread. Pairs are formed by the eggs, the lemons, the furniture legs; a double pair is made of the four fish (by placing the tails of the bottom two fish parallel); the *baguette*, divided in two by the glass vial and the blue stroke above it, is thus made into a pair also. Just as in the later works at Céret, where elements of architectonic stability 'supported' a turbulent, form-destroying intensity, so here the emphasis upon firm organization by a large unifying elliptical rhythm, the rectangular structure of the furniture and the many pairings, analogously supports the brilliant variations on flame-hot reds and oranges.
Marlborough Fine Art Ltd., London

26 Woman Knitting *c.* 1923

32½ x 23½ (82 x 59)
Illustrated: Catalogue of Christie's Sale (Rees Jeffreys Collection), Nov. 26, 1954, Lot No. 125
An extraordinarily vivacious and animated portrait of the Cagnes type (1923–25). The theme of a woman knitting appears in at least one earlier painting, painted *c.* 1917 and reproduced in Szittya. Besides praying, it is the only activity pursued by Soutine's subjects (other than children) until the 1930's. Females apparently attracted Soutine more frequently than did males as portrait subjects at this stage, perhaps because the curvaceous and billowing shapes he favoured at Cagnes were closer to an essential femininity. The reverse seems to hold true also: men were more often portrayed in the slashing, angular style of Céret.
Jacques Lipchitz has told of Soutine's enthusiastic declaration that his 'favourite' work in the Louvre was, surprisingly, Fouquet's portrait of Charles VII. Soutine's love of the fifteenth-century master is reflected here in the concern for a precise, exquisitely sensitive and all-enclosing outline.
Monsieur J. Spreiregen, Geneva

27 Still Life with Red Meat *c.* 1923–24

21½ x 25⅝ (54 x 65)
Plate 16
One of Soutine's most strikingly inventive designs, the picture was struck off with exceptional brio and assured dexterity. Soutine is here seen as a virtuoso of the brush. The red and orange area at the upper left is as fresh and radiant a passage as he ever painted. This is perhaps the only painting of the lower half of this odd table, the top of which was rendered, with different combinations of objects placed on it, many times.
Monsieur Pierre Lévy, France

28 Beef and Calf's Head *c.* 1924 L

36½ x 28¾ (92 x 73)
Plate 18
The forms are severely flattened out and stretched across the canvas as if the flesh were some thin, elastic material. Space is more cohesively agitated than in the other early painting of beef (No. 23), and, compared to that picture, virtually all sense of mass has been eliminated. The contour rhythms are here sharply defined, the result of careful searching and testing; the inner portions, charged with vigorous loaded stabs of pigment, exemplify a more direct means of expression. Another version of the subject, painted about the same time but with greater emphasis on structure and modelling,

was formerly in the collection of Eardley Knollys, London.
Madame Jean Walter, Paris

29 The Road up the Hill *c.* 1924 L.

28¼ x 23¼ (72·5 x 60)
Illustrated: The Tate Gallery Report, 1959–60, London, H.M.S.O., 1960, pl. 7

Soutine's predilection for ascending entranceways in landscapes throughout the Cagnes period was rarely expressed more directly than here. At the lower edge the road neatly and symmetrically fills the canvas surface, then recedes in rapid, uninterrupted rhythms to the vanishing point. Visual 'entrances' into Cagnes landscapes are as significant as the negation of any possible entrance in Céret pictures. The sense of fantasy predominant here befits the new motif, just as the dualism of despair-ecstasy was tied to the self-enclosure of Céret motifs.
The Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London

30 Houses at Cagnes *c.* 1924

21¼ x 18¼ (55 x 46·5)
Plate 15

Faure dated the painting 1919 (No. 6), an incomprehensible ascription in the light of the several other versions of the motif (a road entering from the right, upon which a figure dances and wildly gesticulates, with bulging houses at left and right and quasi-cubistically segmented houses in the centre), which share the orange-yellow-green palette and fairy-tale extravagance found here, and which represent a fully-developed theme of Cagnes style.
The Georg Waechter Memorial Foundation, Geneva

31 Hare on a Green Shutter *c.* 1924–25

31¼ x 21¼ (81 x 54)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Soutine*, Paris, Maison de la Pensée Française, March 1956

One of a series of perhaps a dozen vertical paintings of hares or rabbits hanging by the legs, usually against an indeterminate background, rather than, as here, against a shutter. A tendency toward two kinds of expression prevails in the hares series, similar to the dichotomous presentation of the turkeys (cf. note on No. 36). Some pictures, including this one, are self-contained images (note the way the ears and forelegs reach toward and stop at the inner edges of the shutter), stroked with a lyrical evanescent touch, with a gentle hand for the soft delicacy of fur. In other versions (for example, Faure, No. 18) a rugged impasto is imposed on the rabbits, and, in consonant fashion, the picture surface is broken up by surging, turbulent movements. The former type presents an image of death, the latter, an image of dying.
The broadly curving distorted form of the shutter, which resembles the shapes of chairs frequently encountered in Cagnes portraits, suggests that this is an early version in the series.
Monsieur Pierre Lévy, France

32 Fish and Tomatoes *c.* 1925

25¼ x 35¼ (64 x 85)
Plate 17

A slightly later date than Wheeler's (*c.* 1923) is suggested by the symmetrical arrangement which relates the picture to many still life presentations of the mid-1920s. The stable, regular dispersion of large forms, far removed from the agitated diagonal bias of Céret and Cagnes pictures, is related to the use of smaller strokes, more abrupt and nervous. Spatial planes are now parallel to the picture surface, providing a further measure of stability.
The motif of fish and forks is reintroduced into Soutine's repertory after an absence of some eight years. As before, the forks resemble grasping hands; the present inclusion of tomatoes also contains an anthropomorphic implication.
Jack and Lillian Poses, New York

33 Cagnes Landscape with Tree *c.* 1925 L.

23¼ x 28¼ (59·5 x 73)
Illustrated: Maurice Raynal and others, *Histoire de la Peinture Moderne; Vol. II: Matisse, Munch, Rouault*, Geneva, Skira, 1950, p. 127

A picture unusual for its combination of diverse stylistic and thematic features: the houses are like those painted at Céret; the curving tree trunk anticipates pictures of Vence of the early 1930s; the extreme coiling and twisting of the foliage resembles certain experimental works of 1917–18. The date *c.* 1925 is suggested, however, by the figure, the water, and the predominance of certain billowing, curvilinear rhythms which are characteristic of Cagnes landscapes.
Private collection, London

34 Carcass of Beef *c.* 1925

55¼ x 42¾ (140 x 107·5)
Plate 19

Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* in the Louvre inspired Soutine to four or more paintings of entire carcasses. Similarly, Soutine had earlier been led to the subject of a skate by the Chardin still life, also in the Louvre. The choice and position of both subjects in older painting, rather than any specific stylistic feature, comprised the essential influence on Soutine: Soutine was led

back to a live model. His works are not interpretations of older masters, not paintings of paintings.

The Albright example and the other canvases (in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, the Grenoble Museum and a Paris private collection) were all done before a carcass Soutine had installed in his studio in the Rue du Mont St. Gothard. The great scale (these are among the largest Soutines), the striking vibrancy (a result of many daring contrasts of pure tones) and the prevailing sensuousness of pigment, even into background areas, demarcate the modern character of these works and sets them off from treatments of the subject in older art.

The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, N.Y.

35 The Communicant *c.* 1925

31⅞ x 18⅞ (81 x 48)
Plate 22

The Cagnes-like expression on the face and the searching, curving contours suggest an earlier date than Wheeler's (1927) for this exquisitely ethereal masterpiece of the 'white series'. No part of the figure is cut by the frame; this is as unusual in Soutine's oeuvre as the way the form extends to the four sides of the canvas. Another unusual feature is the ornamented background.

Collection of Mr Edward G. Robinson, Beverley Hills, Calif.

36 Hanging Turkey *c.* 1926

36 x 28⅜ (91·5 x 72·5)
Plate 21

In the mid-1920s Soutine painted more than twenty versions of hanged fowl, sometimes alone, sometimes paired with over-ripe red tomatoes. This is perhaps the finest of the series, in which delicately quivering shapes are rendered with exceptional sensitivity to nuance of tone and touch.

The series may be divided into two types: a restless, baroque deployment of open, agitated shapes and swirling lines, filling most of the canvas – found in pictures where the fowl is upside down (see No. 37); and a quieter, more self-contained and vertical placement with subtle, nervous movements (rather than dramatic thrusts of shape) – found in pictures where the fowl hangs by the neck. Fewer of the latter sort, of which this is one, were apparently painted. In both types Soutine exaggerates the essential aspect of the view suggested to him by either the unfolding or the containment of the bird's plumage.

Mr Richard S. Zeisler, New York

37 Fowl *c.* 1926

37¾ x 28¾ (96 x 72)
Plate 20

Extremely close to two pictures dated 1924 by Faure (Nos. 14 and 16), one of which (No. 14, now in the Art Institute of Chicago) was assigned to *c.* 1926 by Wheeler. Faure's date is highly unlikely; the explosive corruscating force of the image has little of the Cagnes mood of fancy and caprice. The severely flattened form and the surging thrusts of background movements relate to other images of the middle 1920s, both aspects appearing, for example, in No. 38. This is an example of the 'baroque' type of fowl painting; for comparison with the more restrained type see catalogue note to No. 36.

Monsieur Pierre Wertheimer, Paris

38 Pageboy at Maxim's *c.* 1926

32¼ x 29½ (82 x 75)
Plate 23

Soutine's attraction to uniformed figures and to dead animals was simultaneous – interest in both types of subjects was awakened and also declined at about the same time. The fabric of uniforms was like the skin of an animal to Soutine; he sought to translate both materials into the membrane of oil pigment. (This intense attraction to large, flat areas explains why so few landscapes were painted in the middle and late twenties.) Certain portraits, as for example, this compelling image, further resemble some of the earlier still lifes in the way the form is flattened and stretched out at both sides almost as though the figure was being prepared for anatomical dissection.

This is one of the earliest pictures in the famous series of scarlet-garbed nightclub and hotel employees. The figure is poignantly characterized. His anxiety, even fearfulness, is as deftly captured as his sudden forward movement.

Baronne Alix de Rothschild, Paris

39 Woman Bathing *c.* 1929 L

21⅝ x 24⅜ (55 x 62)
Plate 26

Inspired, like No. 34, by a Rembrandt, in this case the National Gallery *Woman Bathing*. The pose follows the Rembrandt closely, but the figure is cut off at half-length and the model is seen more frontally than in the prototype. A few years later, in 1931, Soutine was to paint a full-length version again from this frontal position (illus. Wheeler, p. 91). Unlike the later version, the present one shows no influence of Rembrandt's handling.

Monsieur and Madame Marcellin Castaing, Lèves, Eure-et-Loire

40 Portrait of Madeleine Castaing c. 1928

39½ x 28⅞ (100 x 73·5)
Plate 24

An exceptionally probing portrait of an important personality in Soutine's life in the later 1920s and 1930s. Mme Castaing and her husband were, and are, enthusiastic collectors of Soutine's art, and it was at their château at Lèves near Chartres that Soutine spent the summers of 1931 to 1935. The figure is a brilliant commanding presence, endowed with a nervous grace and regal sophistication exceptional in Soutine portraiture. Her dress is of unusual visual interest and complexity for a non-uniformed figure, and is permeated by a sense of landscape which is equally unusual and effective. She is the only sitter portrayed smoking – appropriate to her air of dash and glamour. The forms, delineated by serpentine edges, build pyramidally to the fine oval of the face. An odd feature is the neat alignment of the edges of the sleeves to the edges of the coat, similar in spirit to the delicate faintly naïve way the dress rests on the bottom canvas edge.
Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot, New York

41 Portrait of Lina *c.* 1928–29

15 x 18½ (38 x 46·5)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Französische Malerei von Delacroix bis Picasso*, Wolfsburg, Stadthalle, April–May 1961, pl. 44

By 1929, Soutine's subjects are no longer felt to be social or psychological types, as many of the Céret and Cagnes models were, or persons playing roles, as were many of the uniformed figures. In the 1930s the figures will assume a certain anonymity tied to their quasi-mythological or emblematic role. But in the last years of the '20s there is a transitional phase, represented here by *Lina*, in which the model's individuality, if not flamboyant or assertive, nevertheless prevails over the artist's own feelings. Soutine's own personality is felt to be subordinated to his model's, as in a commissioned portrait, though without the sacrifice of discovery typical of painting done *for* someone. The choice of middle-class subjects is also characteristic of this stage, and relates to the painter's new position in society.
Kunstmuseum, Lucerne

41a The Polish Girl 1929 L

25 x 18½ (63·5 x 46)
Illustrated: René Gimpel, *Journal d'un collectionneur marchand de tableaux*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1963, on cover.

René Gimpel, noting the purchase from Zborowski of this picture in his diary (September 12, 1929) describes the Polish girl as a poetess; Soutine subsequently told him (October 17) that she was a professional model: she may, of course, have been both. Gimpel relates (October 16) that his brother-in-law, Ernest Duveen, had been much taken by this uniquely pretty Soutine and had then had the luck to come across a sketch for it. After buying this, he gave it to Soutine to sign. Soutine started to repaint it and ended by destroying it. His offer to replace the picture with another brought no consolation to Duveen, who found most of the artist's work monstrous.

On learning that Gimpel had acquired the present picture, Soutine asked if he could see it again. When he called the following day, his host was careful to hang the picture beyond his reach. Soutine complained that the canvas had been enlarged and the hands repainted. Though sceptical about the matter of the enlarging, Gimpel was easily persuaded that the hands were false and provided Soutine with a solvent with which to clean them off, under his watchful surveillance.
Monsieur Georges Halphen, France

42 Portrait of a Boy in Blue 1929

30 x 25 (76 x 58·5)
Plate 25

The surface becomes denser and more sonorous in pictures of 1928–29. There is a predilection for deep blues and dark greens, against which luminous flesh tones assert a thick palpability. The figure is outlined in strong, firm strokes. These qualities are all part of the new taste for a quieter, more subdued and resonant art – an art aspiring toward a state of timelessness and permanence.
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York (property of Mr Ralph F. Colin, Jnr.)

43 The Waiting-Maid *c.* 1933 L

19 x 16½ (48 x 42·5)

In the 1920s the servants portrayed were those of the great Parisian hotels and night clubs, but in the 1930s they are domestics in bourgeois homes, simpler people, less ambitious, less scarred by exploitation. Their uniforms are not the bright pure colours of figures on public display but the less assertive shades of household duty. Facial expressions are devoid of that manic intensity typical of portraits until about 1928; the eyes are generally veiled, downcast, tired – they do not confront us. The ample curves of the figure here recall the curvilinear fancies of the Cagnes period; but there is now a certain bulk and heaviness to the forms, a substitution of dense, fixed pigment for the earlier viscous

flow of paint, less animated deformations and less precise outlining.
Lady Elizabeth Montagu, London

44 Female Nude *c.* 1933

18¼ x 10⅝ (46·5 x 27·5)
Illustrated: Wheeler, p. 92
The only painting of a nude by Soutine known, although others may have been painted and destroyed by the artist. The figure has been invested with a shyness and awkwardness typical of the portraits of children and further characteristic of the tone of sadness and passivity frequently found in pictures beginning in the early 1930s.
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York

45 Plucked Goose 1933

Oil on wood. 16¼ x 18½ (41 x 47)
Illustrated: Wheeler, p. 72 (probably sideways)
The only picture of a dead fowl painted in the 1930s known to the writer; also the only image of a fowl decapitated. This latter fact accounts for the confusion about which way up the picture should be hung. Wheeler exhibited it and illustrated it (p. 72) with the goose's beak facing down. The present owners take the view that the goose is lying on a table, the neck horizontal and below the body. The latter interpretation seems consistent with the distribution of the bird's weight and the fact that its neck is broken, and also with the direction of the brush strokes. It is also probably consistent with the position of a join across the panel about four inches from one edge which, when the picture is hung in this way, is the top edge: it seems more likely that Soutine would have added a piece to the original panel – as he often did – at the top than at the side.
Alex Reid and Lefevre Ltd., London

46 Chartres Cathedral 1933

Oil on wood. 36 x 19¼ (91·5 x 49·5)
Illustrated: Wheeler, p. 27
According to Wheeler, 'twice during the painting of this picture Soutine enlarged it by roughly nailing new strips of wood to the original panel so that it had to go immediately to an expert restorer' (p. 87). It is likely that other paintings were made of the Cathedral, but this is the only one known. Chartres is near the Castaings' château at Lèves, where Soutine spent the summers of 1931 to 1935.
Collection of Mrs L. B. Wescott, Rosemont, New Jersey

47 House at Oisème 1934

Oil on wood; 25¾ x 26¼ (65·5 x 67·5)
Plate 28
This house also appears in a painting of the same date in the collection of Max Heilbronn, Paris. Another picture of about this date, *House in the Country*, in the same collection, is very similar in composition – it even includes the verticals of clouds. The house represented is, however, a different one; it is found again in a picture in the collection of David Finkle, New York (illustrated in Charpentier and dated there as *c.* 1920 but obviously painted *c.* 1934).
Consonant with the quieter mood of landscapes of the early 1930s is the increased distance between painter and subject. Forms are now placed in the middle-ground, encased above and below by areas of sky and ground roughly equal in size.
Mr Richards H. Emerson, Lakeville, Conn.

48 Small Boy on a Hay-cart *c.* 1934 L

20¼ x 14¾ (51·5 x 37·5)
This is closely related to *La Pauvrette*, known to be of 1934, No. 109 (illustrated) in Charpentier. Soutine told Mr F. Mayor that the subject was a little boy he had seen hunched up on the back of a hay-cart. The canvas was extended by the artist.

Soutine painted little children for some time around 1919 and then again beginning in about 1933 and throughout the 1930s. (Although he may have painted the subject in his first years in Paris, only one painting earlier than *The Artist's Studio, Cité Falguière* of 1915, illustrated in Wheeler, p. 32, is known to the writer and that only in photograph: a portrait of a young boy with a rather old face, dressed in a sweater and short pants.)

These are gentle images of sweet pathos, rendered, however, with an exceptional energy, speed and sketchiness for paintings of this time. 'Don't look too hard at her shoes', he cautioned someone looking at a picture similar to this one, 'she is poor, her shoes need fixing, she will be embarrassed.'
Commander Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, Bart., R.N. (retd.), Leicestershire

49 Alley of Trees 1936

30 x 27¼ (76 x 69)
Plate 29
In this view of the Grands Prés near Chartres, the gesticulating figures are engulfed by the dazzling green alley of trees. Many successful versions of the theme were painted with a wondrously wet, thick impasto and liquid, swift strokes. There is an anthropomorphic suggestion

in the trees (especially around the two white holes which peer like eyes through the foliage) which recalls Soutine's early landscapes. One feels the artist's exaltation before trees at this time as similar to his feelings before Chartres Cathedral, No. 46.
A close version of the picture is in the collection of Raoul Meyer, Paris (illustrated in Charpentier).
Collection of Mr and Mrs Ralph F. Colin, New York (property of Miss Pamela T. Colin)

50 Woman Reading *c.* 1936–37 L

25¼ x 31⅞ (65 x 81)
Plate 27

Soutine is said by Madeleine Castaing to have worked on this extraordinary and tragic picture for several days without getting anywhere with the head until he was fired by the look of supplication that had come over the face of his exhausted model. Once the head was completed, he painted out part of the dress for fear that the beauty of its whiteness would distract attention from the expression on the woman's face.
Monsieur and Madame Marcellin Castaing, Lèves, Eure-et-Loire

51 Return from School 1939

17 x 18 (43 x 46·5)
Illustrated: Wheeler, p. 106

Beginning in the late 1930s certain themes of a faintly anecdotal nature were introduced. One such series was of many pictures of children walking or running toward the viewer on a road extending into the far distance. Most often an older boy holds hands with a little girl. Trees generally form a horizontal cluster at the point where the road ends. The poignancy of these images accounts for the explanatory titles often provided for them, e.g. 'Return from School after the Storm'. Wheeler suggests that the genesis of the theme of two children lies in a painting by Courbet (of two children at St. Aubain) which Soutine enthusiastically admired a decade earlier.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

52 Two Children on the Road 1939

17¾ x 25¼ (45 x 64)
Plate 31

There is an almost identical version of the painting in a New York private collection, where, however, about a quarter of both sides are omitted, thus changing the format from horizontal as here, to vertical. That the paintings are equally effective points up the overriding importance of surface and image, rather than compositional qualities, in Soutine.
Monsieur Jacques Guérin, Paris

53 Windy Day, Auxerre 1939

19¼ x 25⅝ (49 x 65)
Plate 30

In some pictures the children are dominated by soaring poplars. Unusual in this canvas is the brilliantly free stroking in the centre of the trees. The rhythm of these lyrical, linear swirls (like a gust of wind made visible) differs markedly from the rhythm and substance of the foliage.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

54 Trees at Auxerre *c.* 1939 L

28¾ x 23¼ (73 x 59·5)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Soutine and his Circle*, London, Crane Kalman Gallery, 1960, pl. 3

Similar to No. 53 are the free calligraphic swirls, denotive of wind movements; the curving path with two figures on it; the type and arrangement of trees. A vertical format here, rather than the horizontal scheme of No. 53, is the result of the compression of the trees and the elimination of space at both sides. In another reversal of composition the trees here incline toward the right, and also converge at the top, in the foliage.
Charpentier dated the picture 1936–37 but a time close to 1939 is suggested by the resemblance to No. 53.
Mr and Mrs Otto Edler, London

55 The Oak 1941

25¾ x 27¾ (60 x 70·5)
Illustrated: Catalogue of *Cent tableaux de Soutine*, Paris, Galerie Charpentier, June-September 1959, Cat. No. 116

A powerful landscape vision, whose motif is not directly related to that of any other known painting. It was painted at Richelieu, a village in the Chinon district, where Soutine stayed briefly before moving to his last residence in Champigny-sur-Veuldre. The great limbs fan out from the central core of the trunk like a grasping hand.
Monsieur Pierre Wertheimer, Paris

56 Landscape with Reclining Figure, Champigny *c.* 1942

28¾ x 36¼ (73 x 92)
Plate 32

Close to another version reproduced in Wheeler (p. 109) now in a New York private collection, in which the upper right-hand portion of the sky is also left unpainted, as if intentionally. The picture combines elements belonging to different phases of Soutine's art: the reclining figure

(Céret and Cagnes), the elliptical curve enveloping the trees and lake (mid-1920s still lifes), the free whirling symbols of wind movement (late 1930s landscapes).
Everything is encased or imbedded: the trees and lake by the sky and ground, the figure in the ground, the house by the trees, even the thick line of the bank is surrounded above and below by the emphatic thrusts of trees and their reflections. Nature now appears majestic and grandiose, supreme as a source of succour and strength, related in this way to the allegorical figure in *Maternity*, painted at this time (reproduced in Wheeler, p. 108).
Collection of Alex Maguy, Galerie de L'Elysée, Paris

57 Landscape, Champigny 1943

12½ x 19¾ (32 x 50)
The reverse of the picture carries the (1948) attestation of Marie-Berthe Aurenche, Soutine's last mistress, that the painting was done at Champigny in July 1943, less than a month before the painter's sudden death. The last pictures of Soutine are unexpectedly pacific and serene, possessed of a restrained joy. The paired geese floating amiably in the pond recall the paired children walking on a road, but while the earlier image points to the uncertainties of the future, the later images convey a timeless aspect.
Galerie Bignou, Paris

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